Men and things in America

MEN AND THINGS IN AMERICA; BEING THE EXPERIENCE OF A YEAR'S RESIDENCE IN THE UNITED STATES, In a Series of Letters to a friend.

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“Of all the ills that human hearts endure, How few are those that kings can cause or cure.” GOLDSMITH'S TRAVELLER.

—“For he no freeman is, Who makes or keeps a slave.” POLLOCK.

Bert Andrew

BY A. THOMASON.

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ADVERTISEMENT.

As the author's, stay in America extended from August, 1835, to August, 1836, it may be expected that he should give some reason for so great a delay in the appearance of his little work. He had taken notes, with a view to a much earlier publication; but immediately on his return to England, having received an urgent invitation to join in a speculation started by a newly-formed company in Belgium, his stay there, and some other hindrances nearer home, caused him to lay hide his first intention altogether. It so happened, however, that the person to whom the letters were addressed, having had for years a strong desire to settle in the United States, in which he was to be joined by several other individuals his acquaintances, having, like am, emigratory predilections, the author was asked to give his opinions at length on the subject, for their guidance: hence the more immediate origin of this volume. As so many take an interest in the subject, the author had been not a little applied to, from many other quarters, for information; and he is now sorry that he could not find leisure enough to extend his notes into their present shape long ago; he would thus have been able to reply to all importunities like a departed surgeon—who will be immortalised by his biscuits, as Madame de Maintenon has been by her cutlets—with the ready stop-query—“Have you read my book?”

It will be seen that the complimentary terms usual in epistolary address have been retrenched, as taking up room uselessly. Nevertheless the following letters are strictly what they profess to be—familiar communications to an old and valued friend, for his behoof and vi that of others more intimate with him than with the writer. Without this understanding, the style adopted might justly be chargeable with undue familiarity.

Mention is made in Letter IX. of certain Addresses drawn up for the perusal of the workmen of the United States, but which did not see the light there. The author's first intention was to subjoin them by way of appendix to this volume, as not inapplicable to existing circumstances among ourselves. On consideration, however, as they would form a good-sized pamphlet alone, he thought they would greatly increase the bulk without commensurately increasing the utility of the Work. Nos. I. and II., however, he has given.

That on Trades' Unions was at first selected, but rejected, partly on account of its length, and partly because a great deal of matter, similar to what is therein contained, has been anticipated by recent articles in the journals. But, indeed, much of what would have been new to the humbler class of enquirers in America, is to be found at sources of easy access among us: and therefore the suppression of most of these Addresses, at least for the present, will be of the less consequence to the English general reader.

One observation remains to be added: that the distinguished person to whom this small work is inscribed, knows nothing whatever of the writer, nor of his intention to make such a dedication.

A. T.

February, 1838.

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APPENDIX 287

ERRATUM.

The indulgent reader is besought to alter the mistaken words “shoal of porpoises,” *in third line page* 13 *of his copy, to* “herds of the grampus.”

MEN AND THINGS IN AMERICA, &c. &c.

LETTER I. PRELIMINARY.

You know, my dear friend, that a tedious convalescence, which followed upon a fit of illness as sudden as severe, was the principal cause of my leaving England for the Continent, more than ten years ago. At that time there was small encouragement to remain in London, for any prospects that our business offered, which had not even at that time recovered from the effects of the panic of 1825. After a while, my health continuing to improve, France became, as it were, a second country to me, and I thought it likely I might pass my days there. Trade generally, and ours in particular, was flourishing; and my prospects of doing something satisfactory for myself in Paris were tolerably fair. Perhaps never, since France was a country, was it in such a prosperous condition. But soon “Jeshurun waxed fat and kicked.” The revolution of 1830—the *glorious three days* —came upon us like a thunderbolt. B 2 That event put an immediate stop to every thing with us for a time; nor was that the worst, had affairs gone on smoothly afterwards within a reasonable space of time; but commerce long seemed likely to fall into a confirmed atrophy. It was then that, being put to my shifts for means of comfortable existence, I accepted a fatiguing and unwholesome situation, which bade fair to send me out of the country in a worse state of health than that with which I entered it. All this I informed you of the time, when you expressed in your letters to your surprise at what you called the suddenness of my determination to visit America. There was also another grievance, springing from a source which you did not *then* know the existence of; and all combined

to make it expedient for me to try a change of scene and circumstances. I had heard and read a great deal about the United States, and my intention to go thither was not new. Just a had reached what is called the age of discretion (most commonly that of indiscretion), it was with me a kind of passion; and I used to look within longing, lingering eye at every American ship which sailed from a certain sea-port, where I passed a twelvemonth about that time. Circumstances forbade my going; the desire abated, and ultimately slept. It was now to be realized. Yet I had and heard enough of America to be much less guine on the subject.

Early in June, 1835, I took my place in the 3 gence from Paris to Rouen. We passed through St. Germain (famous for its chateau), Mantes, Gaillon (noted for a large prison), Louviers and Elbeuf, where are great manufactories of cloth. I lost sight of part of the country, as I had taken the night stage: the road, especially near the termination, rather hilly; but the sudden burst upon the eye of the river Seine, and the little group of islands it incloses, was very fine: the place I mean is about three miles above Rouen. This at once antique and modern city (for it is the great seat of the French cotton manufacture) interested and pleased me exceedingly. I speak not of its factories; I had seen more than enough of them elsewhere; but of its superb antique buildings and monuments, and the beauty of its environs. The Palais de Justice is a rich morsel of the architecture of the middle ages. The church of St. Ouen is the most beautiful Gothic structure I have ever seen. The cathedral, too, is venerable—perhaps even imposing—but its architecture is by no means in so pure a taste as that of the former. I ascended one of the cathedral front towers (the centre one, a lofty spire, had lately been struck with lightning, and pulled down); thence I had a most extensive view, reaching all over the city and beyond. It was early in the morning, the weather fine, and I was so pleased, and stayed so long, that the honest tower-keeper was, or pretended to be, alarmed about me; being an *Anglais* , perhaps he thought I might take a fancy to throw myself from the top. Went to the theatre, and saw a comedy tolerably performed. B 2 4 The house showy, but tawdry: on the ceiling is painted the apotheosis of the great Corneille, who was a native of the place. They also

have him cast in bronze, on their Pont Neuf, which is not unlike the bridge of the same name at Paris; but the former is a fashionable promenade in the evening, which the other is not. I revert to the subject of the theatre merely to mention that I chose a place in the *parterre* or pit, where there were no seats whatever; those prudent enough to come early are able to lean on the back partition of the orchestra. This I take to have been the first arrangement of things both in French and English early theatres—and hence the term: for Shakspeare talks of “splitting the ears of the groundlings: ”—thus evidently indicating the origin of the term.

After a few days' stay, I sailed from Rouen in the steam-boat for Havre: scenery beautiful most of the way. The country (of that part of Normandy at least) may challenge comparison with almost any part of England, and that is saying a good deal. Passed no towns of any great note except Harfleur, which boasts a conspicuous site and spire; however, it is not of these that an Englishman thinks: it is of our glorious Henry V. and Shakspeare. Honfleur is on the further side of the river, lower down, and nearly opposite to Havre. In the steam-boat found my French companions all happy and sociable; the English (with one exception) the contrary. Perhaps I ought not to have made even that exception, the individual in question being a Scotch gentleman, 5 who had been travelling all over the Continent for two years: he had gone abroad to distract his attention from a domestic calamity. To please him, I went to an English hotel, contrary to my rule in such cases, and got treated accordingly.

As I found that the ship which I had taken my passage in was not to sail for several days, I turned the interval to profit, by sea bathing, and excursions to the environs of Havre. But the intense heat of the season (90° F. in the shade) was much in the way of the latter, and confined me a good deal to the town; which seems all perfectly modern, and, by consequence perhaps, uninteresting. There is a fine pier for promenading. The cliffs that extend seaward below the town are of a rugged aspect; and there is one fine bold promontory, rising to a great height sheer from the sea, and having on its verge a lighthouse and signal station, to give notice to the town of ships being in sight. It is about

three miles below the town, but seems much nearer; and when a setting sun brings it out in high relief on the western sky, the effect to the eye of the spectator standing on the pier, is like that of a fine Claude Lorrain painting. Havre is considered by the French no inconsiderable sea-port (it is, I believe, the second they have in amount of trade); and yet I think I have seen shipping to twice the amount of tonnage in one dock (the Prince's) at Liverpool.

Getting tired of Havre, I crossed the estuary of the Seine, and paid a visit to Honfleur, a port of greater account than the former in days gone by, and 6 an agreeable place still. There are parts of the old fortifications entire—such as an embattled gateway, &c.; and the town lies, as it were, huddled up in the lap of the hills. Round the coast, oceanward, the cliffs are very steep. On the top of one of these (called the Calvaire) is a figure of the Saviour crucified, larger than life, and coloured to a hideous similitude of that same; the cross itself being nearly as high as Haman's gibbet. Close to it is the chapel of Notre-Dame-des-Graces, full of votive offerings from devout mariners who have been, or supposed themselves to be, rescued from great perils by her visible interposition: as many most wretched daubs of paintings strongly, I cannot say plainly, testify. The high altar is plentifully garnished with crutches, &c., once serviceable to cripples now no longer so, being made whole by the special kindness of the same beneficent saint: not to mention the various models of parts of the human frame recovered from imperfection and disease in a similar way.—Of a truth, there is nothing new under the sun. We find *bénitiers* for holy (lustration) water still fixed at the temple doors of Pompeii; our museums are filled with many an ex voto of the Pagans: and have we not in Romanism the various and many-functioned saints, that superseded the tutelary deities of the Pagans? There is little change, even in name, if it be true (as the Papists assert) that Jupiter & Co. were succeeded by Jew Peter and the *other* Popes.

On the evening before sailing, went to the theatre at Havre. House handsome outwardly, and the interior 7 respectable; also of considerable extent for the town, perhaps a little too

large. Among other pieces the amusing vaudeville of *Madame Grégoire* , the chief part therein cleverly played by the same actress I saw in it at Paris: other performers not bad.

“Now we sail with the gale, from the land of passports O!” So sang one of the crew, as he saw the two gendarmes descend into the boat, booted and spurred, and long sworded, with their buff gauntlets grasping packets of writings. This sailor, an Anglo-American and a merry fellow, was the only joker of the ship's company; and often talked *at* , if he did not dare talk *to* , the passengers. As these tall stiff-backed gentlemen took their seats beside the pilot, now conducting them ashore, this man said, loud enough for us all to hear, “I've often *heard* of horse marines, but I'm blest if I ever *saw* any afore.”

The wind was favourable for several days, quite a brisk breeze from the east. While that lasted we made good way; but I, always a wretched being on shipboard, scarce left my berth all the time. It is recorded of Mary Queen of Scots, that in quitting her much regretted France she kept her eyes fixed on its receding shores till they entirely disappeared from her view; which proves that her Scottish Majesty must have been what is called a good sailor: as for me, so soon as we were under weigh, I found that the more speedily I got below it would: be the better for my credit.

Passage vessels to America are put upon a very different footing from what they were in Franklin's. 8 time; who treats largely on the subject, and gives a long list of “sea-stores,” and things he says it is indispensable for a passenger to take. He observes, too, how hard it is to get a captain who is at once obliging in his manners and skilful in his profession; yet nothing is more common now. *Nous avons changé tout cela* . The cabin was beautifully fitted up; table supplied with a profusion of every thing: wine, spirits, fruit, &c. furnished at will: and though our fresh meat soon failed us, we had potted meats, and the like, to supply its place; with milk and hot rolls every day. Then we had the pigs and the poultry. Franklin commends the former as being good eating at sea, but cries the other all to nought. I could not much commend the fowls myself, especially those served up towards the end of the affair. The creatures, from neglect and confinement, soon grow diseased,

and rapidly lose bulk. They are sadly knocked about. Loss of sleep seems to have as mortal an effect on them as on ourselves. I have stood by their coops in the night, and listened to the murmurs of their unrest. I assured myself that they dream as truly as we do; and on one occasion, I am positive, some of them dreamed of quarrelling with others: this arose no doubt from their diseased condition.

Now you, my dear friend, who have no doubt seen cabins of first-rate American packets, are not to suppose that all the silk hangings and fringes, rich table covers and carpets, are allowed to remain as you see them so enticingly set out in port. No: with a wise economy the cabin is shorn of all those splendours, 9 which it is no doubt thought would “dazzle (a sick man) in vain.” Yet in real comfort and attention to wants, there is no falling off.—But it is now time to bring my first letter to a close. My second will narrate some incidents of the voyage, with short notices of my fellow passengers. The former, after all, were few. A quatrain, which ran the round of the American papers during my stay, describes laconically, and not very untruly, the whole affair:

“Two things break the monotony Of an Atlantic trip; Sometimes, alas! you ship a sea, And sometimes see a ship.”

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LETTER II. THE VOYAGE.

Our fair wind lasted only five days. The ship was a very superior one, the crew numerous, mostly young active men, and the captain a man of great decision and experience; so that in the time stated, short as it was, we had made considerable way. Afterwards we had, for ten days or more, either light baffling winds, or a dead calm. I often thought, during that time, that surely some way of propelling a sailing vessel might be found out, either by paddles similar to those of steam-boats, or other means; it seemed to me a pitiful state of things, in this age of mechanical inventions, that a ship, full of valuable merchandize and impatient passengers, should lie stock-still upon the waters, waiting the chance of

a wind springing up. Have men, thought I, during all the time that has passed since first ships were sailed, got no farther on than this? Gladly would I have worked all day on any treadmill apparatus, had it moved the ship but one mile in an hour nearer to port. The sailors even, for whom such times are a season of repose, do not seem altogether to like it; and although they take a kind of spiteful pleasure in the baffled anxiety of 11 the passengers, it seems to be a poor satisfaction for the universal impulse of man to move on rapidly, towards an object, whatever that may be. This was at last put an end to by a storm, accompanied with thunder and lightning; about as lively a thing of the kind as I ever “assisted” at. For some minutes the flashes and peals succeeded each other so quickly that one was hardly able to count them. It is probable that the electric fluid, which seemed to play its capricious pranks on every side of us, was attracted by the conductors placed on each mast; and it was a painful thing to think that one poor ship was the only object, in the midst of the maddened waters, that it could spend its strength upon. Our vessel had been struck, and considerably damaged, eighteen months before, in a hurricane in the gulf of Mexico: at that time she sailed regularly from New Orleans. Upon the whole, although I was not sorry to have seen a tempest of this kind “for once and a way,” I was by no means malcontent when it was over. I had the utmost confidence in our ship, its crew, and captain —but none in the conductors, for he told us frankly he thought them worse than useless. It showed, notwithstanding, a commendable care, however mistaken, on the part of the owners, for the safety of those on board, which is not always to be met with; for so long as the present abused system of insurance lasts, most proprietors of ships will be too reckless of consequences to the life and limb of their crews and passengers; as matters at present stand, their profits 12 can be secured against all risk. A worthy gentleman of the name of Ballingall has lately proved to demonstration that with tolerable care in the construction of vessels, and with crews numerous enough to navigate them, very few vessels need ever be lost; that even when they are wrecked, they will hold together long enough for the people to get on shore: for, after all, it is not in the open sea, and far from land, that there is much danger. But such a vicious system of insurance of property, without regard to *life* , has been established, that it is often for the interest of owners that

a ship should be cast away. The mate of our vessel told me, that just before he left New York he saw a ship of 600 tons rigging out for sea, which had been “run up” in 40 days, and in which, he declared, no amount of wages could have ever tempted him to embark.

The storm in question was short, if not sweet: it lasted only nine or ten hours, but it was a good while before the swell of the ocean subsided. As soon as it was over, the captain had the men, by turns, into the cabin to get a small tumbler of spirits. This was no otherwise remarkable than that our ship was a “temperance one”—at least, so far as regarded the men. My friend, the jocose Englishman, seemed to enjoy his glass exceedingly: I asked him if he was usually a “tee-totaller” on principle. “Why, yes,” says he, “rather: I never likes no water in my rum.”

We had now, if not absolutely a fair wind, a tolerable one. We had been by this time out about 13 twenty days, and had scarce made a third part of the passage. I forgot to mention that we saw several shoals of porpoises on the morning of the stormy day, just as the weather was beginning to roughen. “Ho, ho! how they snort and how they blow.” I thought, in my simplicity, from the way they rose and curved, intensely black in the blue sea-water, (not simply tinged, but seemingly as darkly blue as what runs from a dyer's vat,) that they might be young whales. In mid-ocean very few fish are seen; the few that you do see are large, and glide quickly and silently past like ghosts, sometimes being visible to a great depth.

And now I must say something concerning my fellow-passengers. They were not numerous, we being but six in all. Of *steeragers* , there were about a hundred, mostly German peasants, an uncouthlooking set. We were, first, three Spanish gentlemen (I begin with them, for they called themselves nobles,) on their way to New York, meaning to obtain a passage thence to Cuba, where they had property; and also, I believe, to escape from the *agreeable* state of things about to commence in Spain. There were two Frenchmen; one a working lapidary from Strasbourg, of mean mind and low manners, who had been engaged, and his passage-money paid, by some house in New York. He ought

to have been accommodated in the steerage. On the other hand, had that, the natural arrangement, been made, we should have lost by it, for he was invaluable to us as a tom-fool, and he was the butt 14 on all occasions. The other Frenchman was of a different stamp, a native of Versailles, and now on his way to the estate of a relation in Canada. He was of the reddest-hot *mouvement* politics, and of a mind in all things which the French call *bien prononcé* ; a bitter enemy, of course, of Louis Philippe and of England; and uniting in his mind two things rather discrepant, admiration and warm approval of the doings of Buonaparte, with a violent love of pure republicanism. “Liberté, ou la mort!” He was a fine high-spirited young man, but rash in his judgment of things, and a determined hater of England, and every thing English. If he be in Canada still, it is a pretty sure thing, I conclude, that he will have mixed himself up in the Canadian revolt; and, so far as a strong arm and a stout heart can serve such a cause, he must have been an acquisition to it.

Such were my five fellow-passengers.

In the middle of the Atlantic we fell in with a deserted brig. She lay right in the course we were steering; but our captain approached her very cautiously, as he said that, though she looked a sheer hulk at a distance, and externally harmless, she might be full of mischief within: in a word, that pirate ships were sometimes equipped with moveable masts, &c., so as to be made to look like helpless wrecks on occasion, and thus deceive honest traders, till too late to get out of their way. But there was no fear of this; there did not seem to be a soul on board. We sailed close to her stern, on which was 15 painted, in large letters, “The Emerald of Quebec.” The masts were not there, and parts of her companion and galley had been swept away; but watercasks were still firmly lashed in their places, and she floated high in the water, on which she rose and fell at each heave of the restless waves, which ever and anon gushed through her, in at one breach in the side, and out at another in the opposite side, with a dreary hollow sound. She had been a timber-carrying vessel, and seemed to be of nearly 300 tons burden. As her masts had gone by the board, and left

rugged fragments behind, it was pretty plain that she had been run down, most probably in the night-time. What had become of the crew, man and boy?

“Ocean endures no monument To tell of those his greedy waves engulf.”

It was a melancholy sight to us all. She presented, to a fanciful eye, the appearance of some murdered giant's corpse, gashed, mangled, and ghastly. Even the sailors seemed to have their spirits damped for a time by the spectacle. As we passed her, lighted pitch-pots were thrown on the deck, to burn her, if possible; as she might be the destruction of vessels under sail coming that way unsuspectingly in the night, (such an object would scarce be found any where marked in the charts), but these failed to take effect, so we sailed on. My opinion was, that she ought to have been boarded, and deliberately set fire to; which would have given an opportunity to search her cabin and hold; some 16 miserable being, exhausted, might have crawled there to die, and be still not dead, yet too feeble to make “a sign.” But the wind was fair, and the word was “Go a-head!”

By and by we fell in with that singular bird, the petrel. How these pretty creatures live, and move, and have their being so far from any land, seems at first sight a mystery. They are not larger (at least all those which I saw) than a young pigeon. They are long-winged web-footed birds, and are named, in honour of St. Peter (*Petrellus* , or little Peter,) because they appear to walk naturally on the waters; which, by the by, he did not. It is an interesting sight, says Wilson, to observe these little birds in a gale, coursing over the waves, down the declivities, up the ascent of the foaming surf that threatens to burst over their heads; sweeping along the hollow troughs of the sea, as in a sheltered valley; and again mounting with the rising billow, and, just above its surface, occasionally dropping its feet, which, striking against the water, throws it up again with additional force; sometimes leaping with both legs parallel on the surface of the roughest waves for several yards at a time. Meanwhile it continues coursing from side to side of the ship's wake, making excursions far and wide, to the right and to the left, now a great way ahead, and now shooting astern for several hundred yards returning again to the ship as if she were all the while stationary,

though running perhaps at the rate of ten knots an hour. This naturalist conjectures 17 that the partiality of these birds for the wakes of ships arises from the continual turning up of weedy substances by the motion of the water, upon which they partly feed; and also by the detaching of barnacles from the ships' bottoms by the same operation, though the refuse which is cast overboard, such as the offals from cooking, &c., form a part of the attraction. One day, while a group of these birds were enjoying hearty meal on some garbage thrown over our vessel's side, a fellow threw a stick among them killed one. The others, thus disturbed in their meal, rose high in the air, uttering that faint wailing cry peculiar to them, which has such a melancholy sound in the night-time to a wakeful ear, and which, when long continued by numerous birds, is generally the precursor of a storm. They soon came down and hovered over their dead companion; examined it with their beaks as it lay floating on the water; and really, poor things, seemed puzzled what to make of it. I thought of the crew which killed the albatross, in Coleridge's “Ancient Mariner.” Here was a gentle creature which had flown to us from more than a thousand miles off, consequently gifted with far superior natural capabilities to man—able to pass into the clouds, to dive under the ocean, or to skim its entire surface—on a sudden wantonly killed by a two-legged grinning animal, and for what? for the dear stupid love of mischief. The petrel is a very pretty bird, symmetrically shaped, and its plumage of an agreeable brown, with the inside *lining* of the wings (gentle naturalists, pass me C 18 that term!) adorned with a broad band of a finely-contrasting white, tinted at the edges.

During the voyage, the great resource to while away the listless hours was card-playing, With me, who take little pleasure therein, it was reading and lying abed. The consequence was, I soon ran through my whole stock of books, and was fain to borrow one or two. “But weary woe it was, and labour dire,” to kill the time. The Rev. Isaac Fidler, in his account of his voyage across the Atlantic (Travels in the United States and Canada, 1834) makes some candid confessions on this head, drawn from his own experience. He owns it is difficult, or rather impossible, to turn one's attention to literary occupation he set himself tasks, which he could not execute; and even so did I. He says, “On shipboard *eating* is a

positive pleasure;" I seldom found it so. "I hailed the hours of repast with gladness;" so did not I. To be sure I am a poor sickly wretch at sea, and was never thoroughly comfortable in mind or stomach from beginning to end.

We were three days passing through the fogs of Newfoundland, which extend downward a good way. I heard my countryman the sailor (the only one on board at all jocular, the others being all matter-of-fact men,) assuring a comrade that he had once seen the fogs thereabouts so thick, that if a hatchet were thrown at random, it would stick there firm and fast.—At length, about the thirtieth day, our captain began to take soundings, and gave 19 us good hopes of soon reaching port. But the day after set in foggy; and to this soon was added a deluge of rain, such as I have seldom or never seen the like of: this watery state of affairs, with the fog continuing also, lasted full twenty-four hours. All this time, though the wind was available, we made small progress, some caution being necessary in such weather in nearing the coast. It was not till the morning of the thirty-third day that we began to scent the land, which made itself known to us by smell some hours before we saw it. A stray butterfly, too, came fluttering about our rigging, and got caught. It was a pretty insect, and of a species said by the captain to be common in the States, although I never saw one of the kind afterwards.

Just as the roads leading to a great city shew plain intimations of its proximity by vehicles of all kinds, and the bustle of passage and re-passage, even so did vessels now come upon us on all sides, some of them much smaller than any we had lately been accustomed to see. Then came sweet smells from the New Jersey shores, and eagerly did my sensitive nostrils snuff up the grateful fragrance. It seemed to me like what might arise from a broad expanse of mignionette or new-mown hay. I would here fain say something of "spicy gales from Araby the blest," had it not been quoted so often before, yet seldom so appropriately as it would be in this case. But land! land! is in sight. And now strange noises enter the ear, such as never found admission there before: sounds like hundreds of small wheels C 2 20 in spinning mills, interspersed with occasional notes like those of stocking-frames: caused, as I was informed, by some large species of crickets and grasshoppers—

or rather tree-hoppers. And this was America—the New World!—whose shores were now rapidly developing themselves.

I imagine there are few moments of greater enjoyment in a man's life than those that I experienced at this time. The weather was beautiful; our tiresome voyage ended; and a mighty continent, of which we had heard and thought so much, lay before us, “whereon to choose our place!” I was on the tiptoe of curiosity and expectation as to what I might expect to meet with and see on shore; I tried to form a notion of what everything would be like, intending to compare, these present imaginings with the after reality. But however natural my impatience, it soon became evident that, as the day was far spent, there was little probability of my being able to plant foot on American ground that night. As the evening shades fell, the lights in the pharos of Sandy Hook began to tell upon the eye. My friend the sailor now sported the last joke I heard him utter: I never heard one of his trade *pun* before. He said that *Sandy* Hook stood there for no other purpose than to show the way into New York to his beggarly countrymen the Scots!

A pilot now came, on signal being made, and boarded us. I remarked that his boat, and indeed all the others I saw on every side, were light, beautifully shaped, and seemed to course about in a most 21 intelligent manner up to every possible quarter of the wind. The most famous of these are called “Baltimore clippers.” *News-boats* too, a species of craft I had never heard of before, hailed us; a packet of papers was thrown aboard of one, Which made all sail for shore directly, and soon disappeared. These are a fast-sailing kind of yachts, equipped and sent forth by the great newspaper establishments of New York, for the purpose of anticipating the arrival of packets from Europe, and getting the earliest news possible of politics and markets: which news they will publish in 2nd, 3rd, 4th, or 5th editions in, a day, or so often as these foragers, who sometimes sweep the coast in a radius of 100 miles or more, can pick up fresh intelligence. As these vessels are manned by several hands, and their maintenance must be very costly, it gives a lively idea of the dashing system of speculation that is hazarded in America.

Just before dark, we dropped anchor for the night in the channel opposite the quarantine station at Staten Island, and were there boarded and mustered, crew and passengers, by an inspector, who called over the names and went through some formalities. Several agents of the different journals came to glean for newspapers and information, and there was a good deal of bustle in our ship, which now lay quiet enough, except as she slowly swung round with the changes of the tide, pouring out or in from the Hudson—Washington Irving's own Hudson: a river now almost classic. At the quarantine station there are 22 houses for the reception of the sick, and other purposes—a kind of village, in the windows and streets of which I now remarked with some interest the lights carried hither and thither.

Our voyage had lasted thirty-three days—the same duration as the first voyage of Columbus, when he discovered America. I know not whether this trifling coincidence will furnish an excuse for mentioning his great and honoured name; but I could not help thinking of his feelings and anxieties as he cast anchor (at night fall too) before the strand of Guanahana (afterwards San Salvador), not knowing what kind of scene, savage or cultivated, would meet his view with returning light. Meantime, ere we went to rest—for sleep was out of the question, at least with me—the famous city of New York was recognisable in the distance, by its lights, reproduced by reflection on the bosom of the bay, and stretching across it like a long and luminous bridge.

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CHAPTER III. NEW YORK.

On the succeeding morning, long before day-light, I got on deck, ready to avail myself of the earliest dawn, being mighty curious to see what the shores of the New World were like. The river I seemed to have already got acquainted with, as its tide ran rapidly past our ship with a gurgling murmur soothing to the ear. At length the sun rose majestically over Long Island; and, the morning mists slowly clearing away before his rays, we had, on one side, a long line of undulating land, whose gently-swelling summits were here and there crowned with some neat villa or farm-house; in other directions we could see

more imposing country residences, probably serving as occasional retreats to the opulent merchants of New York from the feverish toiling and moiling of that most restless of all cities. The general effect of all this was quite dioramic. Every colour, verdant or russet, came out with a voluptuous richness that I thought I had never before observed any where.

After enjoying the view a reasonable time—pointing out its beauties, and explaining, as far as I was able, its probable peculiarities, to my fellow-passengers, 24 none of whom were *quite* as enthusiastic on the subject as I—we were all summoned to an extra-abundant breakfast, for good part of which, such as fresh meat, eggs, &c., a boat had been expressly sent to shore. It now appeared that there was no probability, if we stayed by the ship, that we should reach New York for three days or more. The announcement of this fact rather damped our spirits, till the captain said he would man a boat for our accommodation, which would take us to a little port hard by, whence we could get a passage in a steam-boat within a short space. This offer we of course gladly accepted; and in due time we were landed at the jetty of Whitehall: so is the nearest landing-place called. Close to this is “the Battery,”a name applied to an irregularly outlined space of ground, at the abutting end of the island whereon New York is built, including a mischievous-looking brick-kiln sort of circular building, from which, in times of strife, no doubt the thunderbolts of war were ready to be hurled; but which now-a-days, things being put on a footing of peacefulness, is become a licensed dispensary of the various mixtures that the souls of Americans do so much delight in, such as gin-sling, cock-tail, mint-julep, and the like. Now this grim building has planted itself right in the way, so as to grievously obstruct all satisfactory view of the beautiful bay; but this inconvenience (else considerable) is easily got over, for a very small silver key, in, the shape of a *fippenny bit* , will open the locks of its formidable gate. The grand prospect from its 25 platforms is then uninterrupted. As I knew not this till afterwards, I turned my attention to a serious consideration of the ground behind, which has a sombre churchyard-like aspect; it is fair to say, however, that the tomb-stones have been left out—as also certain (or rather

uncertain) shrubs and flowers, which menacing “take notices,” painted on several boards in large characters, forbid you to root up or otherwise damage: the penalties in such case made and provided it would however not be very easy to incur; there not being, all the while I was among the Manhattoes, any flower or shrub in any part of the place; nor had the ground the least sign to show for it that any had a right to be there. Having satisfactorily ascertained this important fact, I set my face townward.

From this point begin two long lines of street. That on the left runs parallel with the North River, or Hudson; the wharfs of this side of the town are frequented mostly by vessels engaged in the coasting trade, or by steam boats. The other, after a short bend, leads to the Broadway.

Proceeding up the latter, the number of passengers and vehicles seem to increase at every step, and a very few minutes you find yourself quite in the middle of the bustle and racket of this most stirring city. The shops (stores) here, are many of them as elegant and richly stocked as any in London. Up to this time, we have met with no public or other remarkable building, unless large handsome hotels be counted for such, until we arrive opposite Wall-Street 26 (the Cornhill of New York), right facing which is a very handsome building with a spire, surrounded by a burying-ground (!) It is the principal Episcopal church. The interior is fitted up in excellent taste. I remarked that most of the pews were furnished with long-handled fans, of feathers or other light material, indicating, plainly enough, the heats of the climate, and the annoyance of insects. I was not sorry to find a temporary breathing-place here, out of the hurry-scurry of the Broadway and Wall-Street, where the driving, jostling, and elbowing, must be very annoying to those not accustomed to large towns. What an anxious, unhappy, bilious-looking race they seemed to be—not even one “comfortable,” much less happy, face among them all! Add to this the crashing noises of rapid omnibuses, flying in all directions, and carts, (for even they are driven as fast as are coaches with us), and we have a jumble of sights and sounds easy to understand, but hard to describe. The most crowded parts of London can scarce be compared with it. Wall-street forms a right angle with the Broadway, and leads, in a

straight line, to the East River, where lie the ships engaged in the foreign trade: there almost all the considerable vessels are congregated; and so numerous are they, and so closely packed together—six and eight deep—that it is generally some days before a ship can get a berth at all. When ours did come up, I had to pass over I know not how many decks of others, before I could reach her. Wall-street is the centre 27 of all the considerable business of New York. Here are clustered together the Custom House, several banks, most of the money changers (a formidable band), the insurance offices, ship-brokers, agents, &c., and the counting-houses of the most opulent merchants. In the centre of all this stands (or rather stood) the Exchange, which was a very handsome building, and seemingly well suited to its purposes. The body of it was a lofty hall (not a court with arcades) and the post-office close behind, with passages leading from the Exchange into it. Such an arrangement must have been convenient to the merchants, in a mart where foreign arrivals take place from hour to hour. In front and at the back the building itself was divided into a lower and upper floor, in which were many commodious rooms for the transaction of business. In the centre of the hall had been placed a rather fine statue of a great statesman and excellent man, the federalist, Colonel Hamilton, who was shot in a murderous duel by Aaron Burr. In a country so bare of works of art, the destruction of such an ornament was almost a national loss. Of course you will remember, that in a few months from the time I visited the place, this Exchange, and “all that it inherited,” most of Wall-street, every smaller street leading therefrom to a great distance around, including banks, wholesale stores, &c.—in short, the very *core* of this great city's heart—all was reduced to formless heaps of ruins in a few hours. Never, perhaps, were magazines more full of the richest of 28 merchandize than at the time of this event—December 1835. The cold (I remember it too well) was so intense that not a drop of water was to be obtained; all that the sufferers had to do, in the end, was to look on, and let the devouring flames have it all their own way. At first, quantities of goods were removed to a distance from the first seat of the conflagration, into churches and other places; but these supposed places of safety soon caught fire also: all the while a scene of plunder was going on; seldom seen in a civilized country. But more of this elsewhere.

Only a few days before my arrival, some scores of buildings had been burnt down in the, same quarter, including sundry newspaper and other large printing establishments, &c., with one or two churches; several individuals, too, lost their lives. It was the greatest fire (to a smaller extent they are of nightly occurrence, and usually thought little about) that had taken place—so they told me—for some time; they were fated to have a greater soon, the most extensively destructive of our times, excepting indeed the unparalleled one of Moscow. I saw the labourers digging at the smouldering ruins in search of bodies, the flames every now and then bursting out. I have long thought the continual recurrence of fires on land, and wrecks at sea, an anomaly in a state of advanced civilization. These houses had been run up to a great height (the confined groundplan of this part of the city in some measure obliging them to this,) and of only one brick 29 thickness; once fairly in combustion, it was plain they could hardly keep together for an hour. Whole sides of walls had come down bodily; and I remarked there was scarcely any plaster between the bricks. Verily, thought I, they of the “Saxon blood,” which the Americans are really proud to think they have in their veins—these same Saxons of both hemispheres are behind the Gauls in the useful art of preserving life and estate from the chances of total destruction by accidental fire. During a good many years' residence in Paris, to my certain knowledge there was not one private-dwelling burnt. Some few fires, to a trifling extent, did take place in floors of houses, and to these portions they were all confined. Of theatres I speak not: every where they are “trebly hazardous.” The “tyrannical” French Government takes care that play-houses shall always be isolated from other buildings. This part of New York was, soon after I saw it, rebuilt exactly as it had stood before, (!) Burnt again, to a ten times greater extent, the same system has again, been followed. If the Americans are great innovators in some things, it is not in the routine of house-building. I know not whether the upper floor of *their* Exchange was one continuous corridor, divided by wooden partitions. Well may the doomed chimes ring out, like a felon's penitential psalm, “There's nae luck aboot the hoose.” How could there be any?

Returning to the Broadway—which a stranger naturally threads his way to as a point of departure or return—I walked up, through a range of shops 30 and hotels as well appointed as most in London, to an open space of irregular shape, called the Park, which interrupts the line of the Broadway houses, to the right. In the centre it is laid out into grass plots and gravel walks, with a few trees, the whole surrounded by a railing. On the upper side is the City Hall, perhaps as fine a building as any in America; excepting the Capitol at Washington, which last, however, puts a Londoner provokingly in mind of our Bedlam. The City Hall is outwardly handsome, and in its interior commodious—in short, a neat affair altogether. Let us not pass without mention the famous Park Theatre, though it have nothing remarkable outside; still less Tammany Hall, the kind of “Crown and Anchor Tavern” of New York. It is principally used for public meetings. One Sunday night, seeing it lighted up, I entered it, and found a man holding forth against the Christian revelation. The men and women auditors (all respectably dressed) sat apart from each other; and in a corner was a band of instrumental performers to wind up the affair. Deism set to music! Hard by the Park but not in sight, is the Bowery (or national) Theatre, devoted to fostering “native talent,” which, God wot, stands much in want of such succour. But the Park is the highest priced, and most fashionable theatre. No distinguished individual, or family of any pretensions to gentility, is ever seen at the Bowery in New York, or the Walnut-street theatre of Philadelphia; which last similarly sets up a hopeless rivalry of the English 31 theatre in Chesnut-street. The exterior of the Bowery displays most pretensions; but its architecture is in the worst possible taste, and tawdry to the last degree. Over the portico are, most basely sculptured, the national arms, flaring with colour and gilding, the whole surmounted by a flag-staff of an enormous size. I may as well mention here that the Americans are amazingly fond of flags. You see the “star-spangled banner” every where, even on the lowest pot-houses. Lastly, on the left or Broadway side of the enclosure of the Park there is a gigantic hotel, built of grey blue-stone, (which passes here for marble), that in size surpasses most barracks I have yet seen. I am not sure but I have heard it was to be called the “Mammoth Hotel.”

Upon the whole, the Park is an agreeable place; and if such a pleasant vacancy had been left in a French town, it would have been set apart for a *place des armes* . The first look I had of it made me think that if it were not so in name, it might be in effect used as a place of warlike mustering. I found the entire area, and indeed the whole neighbourhood, in a state of complete commotion. Bodies of men were marching and countermarching in files, with drums and fifes and trumpets; while solid masses of others were drawn up, as it were, in battalia. When I came to inquire into these appearances, I was informed that it was a general parading day of the “Trades' Unions” of the city. What! thought I, is it necessary even *here* for men to combine—to club together—to obtain their natural 32 rights (beginning with that of tyrannizing over their neighbours) in this happy country, where each man is free as the air he breathes:—I learned farther that full one half of the mechanics in the place had “struck;” and that one trade in particular, which I had learned in my youth, and might, other things failing, become a precious resource to me—that even the professors of *that* trade had turned out with the rest. The general question, and the particular instance, set me a musing rather pensively. I stepped out of the turmoil into the lobby of the City Hall, which is stuck all around with advertisements of various “wants,” (for this is a world of wants, although Mr. D'Israeli has of late reduced them all to two—“want of love, want of money”); and there I saw, inscribed in fair characters, an intimation, among many others of a like kind, that the writer, a young man of liberal education and good connexions, would thankfully give his best services to any body that chose to command them for three dollars (about 12 *s.*) per week. All this was no ways encouraging. It was, in fact, the first unwelcome indication I had of an over-stock of hands and an under-stock of employment. And then I thought upon lying books and lying newspapers, and a great many other things, of which more anon.

In the meantime it was necessary for me to look out for an hotel; and, as an indispensable preliminary, to get some of my European gold turned into American paper. One need never go far to find a money-changer in any town or village of America— 33 they swarm every where—leave any locality to visit another, and your money loses part (sometimes

no small one) of its value. They are by far too numerous for them to be able to afford to maintain the trade in the wholesome sweetness of honesty. The talents of five out of every six of these gentlemen, in any given town, could easily be spared, and with unspeakable advantage to the general pocket: it is thus that when they do get a bite, the fangs are sent in rather deep. In France there is a regular tariff fixed by the government to prevent mistakes—for money-changers, both before and since they were turned out of the Temple, have been supposed to be more liable to these than most other traders; but France is a land of slavery, whereas this is the unique country of freedom; and one can never pay too dear to be assured of the fact.

Having now found a tolerably comfortable hotel in Fulton Street, at the bottom of which is a spacious market, and near thereto another “Mammoth Hotel,” you must allow me to rest and refresh myself.—My Versaillian, bound for Canada, has companioned me every where hitherto like a faithful dog, and never quitted my side for an instant all day—probably for fear of accidents, as he hates the English, and has not learned to speak American. When a man comes into a country, no one word of whose language he does know, he has the mortification of finding out that he can become a child once more. Not that my Frenchman showed himself a child at all points; for instance, he wondered at D 34 nothing. He was all for the *nil admirari* system: with one signal exception, however, for he stared in amazement at the *calash* bonnets of the first females he saw. These must be light and convenient, though; and I think that, from old prints I have seen, they were once common in England. They are not worn by the American women of the superior classes, except in going to and returning from the theatre, or parties. They are mostly made of green silk; and when expanded, comfortably surround the head and ears, having the facility of contracting, like a fan, into a small space.

I am now about to prepare for taking my place in a firm bed—rather a novelty for me of late. As my head is in a bit of a whirl, I shall see whether a fresh night-cap and a fixed pillow will have a steadying effect upon it. So I most heartily bid you good night.

LETTER IV. NEW YORK AND ITS NEIGHBOURHOOD.

New York is built on Manhattan Island, which is fifteen miles long, and reaches to a width of one and a half. The general configuration of the city, which is built at the southern extremity of this island, is something like that of a pear—the Battery is the lowermost point or twig.

The site of the old city, that which is the business part still, covers but a small space—it is the narrower part of the supposed pear. The ground plan of the city was originally very limited. Cooped up between two rivers, the Hudson on the west, and the East River, separating it, on the other side, by a channel half a mile wide, from Brooklyn in Long Island, there was no means of finding further elbow-room, but by extending it further up the island of Manhattan. The settlement the Dutch made here, you of course know, was called New Amsterdam. Little did its original founders think, that it would one day become, in the hands of their conquerors' descendants, the Tyre of the western world. The situation they chose had “ample room and verge enough” for *them;* but, in others' hands, led to grave D 2 36 inconveniences as the want of farther room increased. It has been asserted, that the Dutch built New Amsterdam on no regular plan; that in fact the streets were originally nothing more than cow-paths, along which the houses were ranged, following all the capricious deviations of these animals on their way to the upper pastures. Whether this be literally true, I know not: certain it is the lower or oldest part of the city seems strangely put together, and is not a little perplexing for a stranger to find his way through.

The outward appearance of the buildings is neat; they almost all, excepting in a few low quarters, look particularly clean. Many of the houses have the brick-work painted red, with green doors and window blinds; the former having plated (not brass) names upon them, which never tarnish—thus proving the dryness of the atmosphere here. The Americans are prodigal of paint. The New Yorkers seem to have acted upon the sentiment of the Dutch nation, from whom many of them are descended, who have a proverb, that “paint costs

nothing.” Americans, on first arriving in Liverpool or London, are always struck with the grimy and dingy look of our brick buildings; on the other hand, we have not, like them, any “frame-houses.” These are scattered, at intervals, in New York and all American towns. In case of fire, they are the great spreaders of destruction, and ought not to be permitted to stand. In New York and Philadelphia—perhaps in other places—there is a regulation in force, that, once 37 burnt down or demolished, no others shall be permitted to be built: this evil no doubt will remove them in time. Meanwhile, their proprietors keep them up with a jealous care. This may be commendable on their part, as showing a respect for reliques of old times; but the existence of such masses of material having a strong affinity for combustion, must not a little raise the price of insurance.

Of course, the upper or broader part of the city is the most airy and the most genteel; it is, no doubt, built on the pasture grounds of the Dutch cows already mentioned. There are many streets, and a few squares, which would not disgrace our West End. What the rents may be in that quarter, I know not. In the City proper they are high; in certain streets enormously so. In no part of any city in Europe, perhaps, is such a price paid as ground rent. It would not be easy to find a parallel any where but in the Palais Royal, where every square inch is well known to be as precious as beaten gold. In the Broadway—which, in some parts, may be compared to Cheapside—first-rate shops are let at rents ranging from 6,000 to 10,000 dollars a-year. As no notice, unless by special agreement, is necessary, people have thereby a facility of speculating to their own ruin, to an extent and with a rapidity which could hardly exist with us. First floors over these shops let proportionably high. For such a one as would be used by a teacher, engraver, or artist—three rooms unfurnished—I was asked about £20 a-month.

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The resident inhabitants of New York, by one authority, are computed at 300,000; by another which included Brooklyn and probably an estimated amount of shifting population, such as emigrants, sea-faring-men, &c., the amount was stated at full 420,000; the latter I take to be pretty near the mark. When I was there, emigrants were pouring in at the rate of

20,000 a-month; in one week more than 6,000 were landed. The bulk of these, of course, scatter themselves about different parts of the country; and one portion finds it the most convenient route to Canada. New York, although the greatest city of America, is not even the capital of the state that bears the same name; the latter, the best peopled of all the States, has more than two millions of souls—a population greater than that of Scotland. The capital is Albany, 150 miles off, a thriving place, but not containing as yet quite 30,000 inhabitants. The same system obtains in all the other States, of removing the seat of government to some distance from the larger towns. There is, no doubt, a judicious policy in this; the founders of American liberty were wise men; of a surety “there were giants in those days.” They knew the pernicious influence the masses were likely to exercise on the deliberations of the state legislatures—the “pressure from without,” of which factions are so prone to avail themselves; which, like the element of fire, they find at first a useful servant, but in the end a cruel master. The seat of the general government was long established at Philadelphia. On this account, the Pennsylvanians 39 still affect to call theirs “the empire state,” and have recently made some attempts to have restored to them the seat of general government. It was to prevent jealousies, much more than to build a model city or to pay a compliment to Washington, that a new capital was projected (for even yet it is but begun), one that should have its site in none of the States. Accordingly, it is situated in the *district* of Columbia, which has a square area of 100 miles only. The state of Pennsylvania, although Philadelphia numbers over 200,000 inhabitants, has for its capital Harrisburg, with less than 5,000; while the capital of the State of Illinois is *Vandalia* , with only 500—enough, too, perhaps, if its inhabitants are of the same stamp with the older barbarians.

But to return to the people of New York. They are a very good-looking race, both men and women; and this applies (even yet more exactly in other instances) to the generality of the Americans. The men are almost all lean and lathy; and most of the women (especially in the superior classes) slightly made: several of the ladies that I saw in New York, had the most perfect sylph-like figures. A good complexion is a rare thing here; in their faces

nature has planted more lilies than roses. But no where have I seen finer complexions than those of the ladies of Philadelphia. This difference, on a distance of country short of 100 miles, may be partly accounted for by a slight variety of climate, and greater arising from situation, for New York is built in a healthy spot; besides, the excessive dissipation of 40 the one, and the sober quakerish habits of the other, must count for something. Among the men, a deformed person is scarcely ever to be seen. Both sexes dress well and expensively, and most have that indescribable something in outward appearance, called gentility, strongly stamped upon them; the ladies especially have a deal of what the French call *tournure.* The ladies of New York, and indeed all other towns, follow much more than ours the fashions of France. All the topping dressmakers are French. If the converse of the proverb were true of nations, “Handsome is, that handsome does,” the Americans would be a most desirable people to abide with. But they are decidedly an unamiable, and consequently an unhappy, race; although they have the happiness of not knowing it. Bilious complexions are too common among the men of New York. In fact, I could not see one “comfortable looking” individual among them all.

While at New York, it was to me a delightful thing to turn my back upon all the toil and trouble of that city, and, reposing myself at the Battery, look out on the beautiful and quiet scene presented by the bay. Its natural features are of the first order, and the continual passage of vessels of all descriptions, gives it a variety which prevents monotony. Of course, the least picturesque of the vessels that pass and repass, are the steam-boats. Their smoking chimneys, their ungraceful and worse than dromedary projections, give the idea of a floating foundry. I have considerably lost my enthusiasm for the lake 41 of Geneva, since they have covered it with steam-boats. If Rousseau could rise from the grave and see the substitutes of the pretty sailing skiffs of his time, he would hold up his hands in sorrow, and say, “On m'a gâté mon beau lac.” You have no doubt already read many laboured attempts at a description of the Bay of New York; so I shall not endeavour to make another. I hold that no man can have any thing but a very vague, perhaps a false idea, of a grand natural scene. We read pages on pages of details, and it seems to us as

if we were being put in perfect possession of a consistent whole; but “the mind's eye” is a sad self-deceiver. Mrs. Radcliffe commences her “Mysteries of Udolpho” with a minute description, forty mortal pages long, of the scenery of the Pyrenees! which mountains I doubt whether she had ever seen one of: be this as it may, a fly perched on St. Paul's, with a four-inch sweep of vision, might as well have attempted to describe that mountain of architecture. However, for the information of those who have had no account elsewhere of the bay of New York, I may as well mention that its outline is formed by the island of Manhattan, by StatenIsland, placed nearly opposite; nearer, but more to the right, and not quite so much under the eye, is a portion of the continent of New Jersey; to the left is the lower part of Long Island. The nearer waters of the bay are agreeably diversified with some islets, such as the Governor's, &c., which all fall under the range of view in regarding it with your back to New York, and your face turned to Staten Island; 42 the last forms part of the state of New Jersey, while Long Island belongs to that of New York. The islands in the bay are no way picturesque in themselves, nor do they owe much to art, but add considerably to the general effect. What is called the bay of New York (for the term is almost a misnomer), is really the estuary of the Hudson. Staten Island seems to plant itself as an obstacle in the way of its waters; the noble river divides and passes round it with a double channel. At this point, too, the current of the East River pays its tribute to the general mass of waters. On the continent of New Jersey, the first town that meets the eye, is Jersey City; but which, despite its well-sounding name, seems an insignificant place. Higher up is Hoboken, a kind of transfluvial Hampstead, much frequented at holyday times by the Cockneys of New York. On summer Sunday evenings, steam-boats ply incessantly; indeed at all other times they communicate with it pretty constantly; the distance is between two and three miles, and the charge 3 *d.* on week-days; on Sundays probably double; for, every where in America the sin of sabbath-breaking is costly.

Those who have had the pleasure of reading Mrs. Butler's outspeaking and highly talented volume on America, must be familiar with the name of Hoboken . It is a prettily situated but rather straggling village, with a commanding front to the Hudson, and has a fine country

behind and around. There being scarce any open public promenade in New 43 York, and the air not being good, genteel families find it advantageous to send their children thither for daily recreation. I saw there a kind of railway *merry-go-round* set up for their benefit, which would make any one's fortune in England or France. It was a round construction of frame-work, the outside of a great circle being partly moveable and partly fixed, on the former portion of which the young folks were firmly fixed in chairs, with their nurses. In these they flew round with great velocity—yet, the circumference being extensive, without any sensation of giddiness. The motion, thus so rapid at the extremities, is communicated from the centre, by horses, leisurely pacing out of sight, as in a gin.

The walks about Hoboken are delightful; the shore is bold, and the surface of the country picturesquely undulated: here are also some fine old trees, rather a rare thing in most parts of the four states which I have been in. How these trees have escaped destruction, I know not. I suppose it so happened that they were not wanted, and so escaped the axe. The Americans seem to have no idea of ornamental planting; even their finest villas have a naked appearance. I do not doubt the truth of an anecdote related of an American, who, when proudly Shown the fine prospect from Richmond Hill, said, “The country *would be* a fine country enough, but it sadly wanted clearing!” As for the great masses of natural wood which I saw remaining, 44 here and there, on high grounds of difficult access, most of it had a mean scrubby appearance.

No where can so good a general view of the city of New York be had as from Hoboken. Brooklyn more directly faces that city, at not more than a fifth of the distance; but the view there is much obstructed by the dense mass of shipping; and the harbour-side of a great port is always its *dirty* side. The great lion of Hoboken, when I was there, was a genuine Barbarian, named General Jackson. I do not mean the great cotton-bag hero so called, but a *protégé* of his bearing the same name;—in fine, an actual young lion, sent to him as a present from Africa by one of the piratical states of Barbary. The Congress having provided no funds for the keep of such an animal, the general sold him to a showman, by whom he was now exhibited to the public at 6d. a head. What was the price paid for him

I do not know; it must have been a windfall to the general; unless, indeed, he parted with him dogcheap, from jealousy, to rid the city of Washington of such a “rival near the throne,” for it is well known that the general is tenacious of the distinction of being himself the only “lion” in the whole country.

The passage that separates New York from Brooklyn is called the East River. It is here half a mile wide; higher up it widens into Long Island Sound.

Brooklyn is the kind of Southwark or Walworth 45 of New York, with a wider separation; but which steam-boats, continually passing to and fro, bring almost as near as our bridges. It is famous for a small naval depot, which passes for something in a country that has only heard of Portsmouth. I saw two frigates afloat, and two on the stocks. One of the former I visited, and was very civilly shown all over by one of the officers. Every thing was in the greatest order; and the crew as fine a set of men as could any where be seen. I found a schoolmaster on board in uniform, busily instructing some lads, probably in navigation. The frigate I saw was one of the four that was constructed, more than forty years ago, when the government took the first step towards forming a navy, on occasion of some misunderstanding with the ephemeral French Directory. These ships are all afloat now, in good order for service, and are first-rate sailers, with superior capabilities to any they have been able to build since that time. The one I examined is nick-named *Old Ironsides* , from its solid construction; yet with all its firmness it obeys helm more readily than any of the modern frigates, so much lighter and prettier to look at; for whereas the latter require at least four men to work the wheel, the former needs only two. One might imagine, from this rare example, that once upon a time public contractors were honest men.—Long Island, on the lower verge of which Brooklyn stands, is well named, it being 140 miles long by ten of medium breadth.

I have given some particulars of the view on two 46 sides of the Bay of New York—first, from the Battery, and second from Hoboken. But the most comprehensive, the most animated, and in some respects the finest, is that from the high grounds of Staten Island;

a locality beautiful in itself, and the chosen retreat of the opulent citizens of New York for summer rustication. Brooklyn indeed is nearer, and has many good suburban residences at reasonable rents, but they are not so *distingué* .—To the southward is the ocean, spotted with distant ships; at your feet, labouring steamers, and sailing vessels and skiffs of every variety of shape and rig, gliding continually along in all directions. The eastern extremity of this island points straight up Long Island Sound, the most frequented in North America, being the usual channel by which trade is carried on between the Eastern and Middle States. A short way up is the celebrated Hell-gate, so pleasantly treated of by Washington Irving.

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LETTER V. IRISH OPINION OF THE AMERICANS, &C.

On the morning of the third day after my landing in New York, I saw my French friend safely embarked on board the Albany steam-boat. He bought a map, on which I traced for him the route he was to take. He was sure of not going wrong for the first hundred and fifty miles, Albany being at that distance from New York. I may as well mention here, that this map, as well as every other of American manufacture that I had occasion to examine, was shamefully incorrect. As the government never has a sixpence at its disposal beyond what is allowed it for the wants of the day, nothing is ever done for constructing more correct plans of the country. They avail themselves of the improvements brought about by English money in this as in every other respect; and their ships are all navigated by means of English charts. The booksellers who publish the things called maps and atlasses, knowing that they must sell them at a very low rate, and knowing that not a cent more would be paid for a superior than for an inferior article, go on copying and re-copying, perpetuating old blunders along with a handsome 48 increase of new ones. Even the price of one copy of our superior publications, to serve for a model, would be held too dear by an American publisher. Is it not shameful to be indebted to us for correct plans of even their own coasts? By way of pleasing the eye of the purchaser, their things are generally showily garnished with a border of trumpery engravings, and always daubed plentifully

with coatings of many colours, through which it is very difficult to read the names of places at all; but there may be policy in this, for the paint, like charity, often covers a multitude of errors.—But to revert to my Frenchman: the steam-boat being now ready to start, he saluted me in the most brotherly fashion, after the mode of his country; that is, he kissed me on both sides of the face; and I having done the same by him, and commended him to the keeping of Providence we parted, probably never to meet again.

I now bethought myself of delivering some of my letters of introduction, of which I had half-a-adozen to different houses or individuals engaged in trade in New York. I was received with a show of hearty kindness by all, and got encouraging promises from several, But there the matter pretty well ended—excepting that I had a few dinner invitations. The truth is, such letters are of very little use in America. So many are sent that they scarcely ever get attended to. It is necessary to appeal strongly to people's interest here, if you would induce them to do any thing. A man must do every thing for himself: if he do not, small indeed is the 49 number of those who will do any thing for him. I was not exactly aware of this at first, and deceived myself accordingly. A gentleman who knew the country well, told me afterwards, to trust nothing to such credentials. He said they were like so many insignificant petitions to Parliament, laid on the table and never more heard of. The person in question was a bit of “a character,” and I am now about to give some particulars of him. The hotel at which I lodged in New York, was tolerably well furnished, and of considerable accommodation—as full forty persons sat down to dinner daily. The Americans, quick at every kind of business, are quickest of all at that of eating; their refections are dispatched as rapidly as an English road-side meal, eaten to the sound of the mail-guard's horn. For the most part, no one utters a word, except in a low tone. The “silent system” there is not entirely confined to the state prisons. This is more especially true of New York; yet perhaps it is better, after all, than what my unwilling ears have been sometimes regaled with elsewhere, disputations and wranglings about their petty politics.

Every day at meals, I noted a very perceptible change in the composition of the company —on a daily average there were not more than three out of any four of my companions

the same. Besides, the hotel custom of New York is a very fluctuating one; and being the centre point of all comers and goers from and to every part of the Union, it is the chosen threshold of emigrants. If the Pelasgi of ancient E 50 times were famous for their roving propensities, they are far outdone by the Americans. The organ of locomotion may have been as strongly developed in the ancients, but then they had neither rail-roads nor steam-boats.

Franklin has left on record his testimony to the inquisitiveness of the American character. Aware, probably, of this being cast upon them as an imputation, they seem, in less primitive times, to have gone to the other extreme. Whether it be that they look upon all emigrants as a set of poor destitute devils who cannot find means of existence in the "old country," I know not, but I cannot conscientiously accuse any of them (except in one instance) of taking the least interest in any affairs of mine. They are, almost all, rigid and repulsive in their manners, and seem ever to look into you with the keen cold eye of "sly inspection," before you can get an answer to the simplest question. Of course what I have said applies more especially to those you meet with in public. They know nothing of what Falstaff calls "the freedom of mine inn."

One respectable middle-aged looking gentleman, of weather-beaten aspect, who had shown me a number of little courtesies at table, I had remarked as a favourable exception to the rest, and him I soon had an opportunity of being acquainted with, as I met him by chance in the coffee-room (or rather drinking and smoking room) on the evening of the fourth day after my arrival. I had already suspected he was not an American, and so it turned out. He was 51 an Irishman—Mr. W—r by name, and from somewhere in the neighbourhood of Belfast; he told me he was descended of a Scotch family settled in the north of Ireland. He had been more than twenty years absent from his country, and the greater part of that time he had been employed in the publication trade, which he had been brought up to. When I met him, he had come to New York to settle some affairs there, and to find a passage to Ireland; being about to quit America for ever, with which he appeared to have become utterly disgusted. After all his labours and speculations he had realised

next to nothing, perhaps little more than enough to pay his passage home; but he was called thither by the recent deaths of a nephew and niece, who had been in possession of some property in Ireland; and this now fell to him; his elder brother, and their father, being long since dead. He certainly was one of those persons that Dr. Johnson expressed a partiality for;— *a good hater* . The Doctor would have been delighted with him. For the rest, a well-informed intelligent man, only a little too sarcastic. Both of us had by chance a good deal of time on our hands,—he was not unwilling to communicate, and I anxious to receive information about the country, so we grew intimate in a very short space of time. He interested himself very kindly in my prospects, which, he assured me, were likely to turn out any thing but satisfactory; and I must own that my experience confirmed, in the main, most of what he said. I am not sure, however, as first impressions are said to be the strongest, that E 2 52 these conversations with him may not, unconsciously to me, have given an undue bias to my mind. A sample taken from his first conversation with me, may amuse. On my asking him what he thought of the Americans generally, and of their national character, he indulged in a long diatribe against them. I shall give a portion of it in his very words, as nearly as I can remember them:—“The poet Pope had a great talent of squeezing a deal of truthful meaning into a few words;—but he was entirely out when he stigmatized England as being

‘A land of hectors, Thieves, supercargoes, bank directors.’

Now, what was never true of the English, is as true as Gospel of the Americans, (the Yankees especially,) who swarm like locusts on every part of this continent.” (I here stopped him to inquire what he meant by making, as it seemed to me, a distinction without a difference. It was then I first heard that the term was recognized only of the inhabitants of the Eastern states. He thus resumed.) “They are to a man braggarts; and many of them, if they be not swindlers, have horse-jockey tricks in dealing which they glory in, which yet you or I (supposing—which God forbid!—we were *keen* enough to practise) should be ashamed to own. In religion, the great mass are either fanatics or hypocrites; in a word, there are two deities which they more especially worship, Mammon and *Gammon* . I

showed you to-day a sly dancing-master's prospectus, who professes to teach ‘dancing on Christian principles.’ You also saw, in the Broadway, 53 way, huge placards announcing, in large letters, an exhibition of ‘Moral Pictures.’ As far as church-frequenting, bible-spreading, and barbarian tormenting missions can make them so, they are out of all question the most ‘religious people’ in the world.

‘They're very heathens in the carnal part, But each a right good Christian in his heart.’

It would be a kind of blasphemy perhaps for me to say, that such a nation *can* be under the dominion of Satan, who is the prince of the power of the air; but this I am certain of, they have passed under the domination of the prince of the power of humbug!”

Having mentioned that one of my plans was to do something, if necessary, in the way of teaching, he asked me, “Can you give lessons by steam? Can you lay the grammar and dictionary aside altogether, and shock languages into your pupils by an electrical machine (taking care not to charge it with Italian when you mean to charge it with French)? Can you teach captains of ships, or others pressed for time, a beautiful copperplate hand in three lessons, as a fellow of the name of Bristow (as you have seen) undertakes to do? Have you brought with you any new inventions of cloths, that when torn will skin over, like a living cuticle when lacerated? Can you throw snuff by handfuls into—” I here laughingly stopped him, and said, none of these things could I do, and assured him that what I did undertake would be entirely on the old system. “Well, then,” he rejoined, “that has been exploded here long ago, and superseded by a system of outrageous puffery that 54 you can form no idea of.—But you will soon learn this, that unless you shift your tack, you will never do for this country.” As he had heated himself a little by all this strong language, he begged my pardon for the liberty he permitted himself, and asked me the plain question why I left Europe, and whether I could not get bread to cat there? I said I had never as yet wanted for that; putting him in mind, by a Scriptural quotation, rather irreverently though pertinently applied, of the inadequacy of even an abundance of that staff of life to satisfy the desires of people not immoderately ambitious. “Well, then,” he responded, “if you

had bread at home, I can assure you it will never get buttered here. When you asked me to-day, why the Americans used the term bed-bugs, I told you the distinction was a necessary one, for that there were many other kinds of bugs; but I did not tell you then, as I do now, that the most numerous species of all in their country is that of the humming bugs!”

Then dropping that odd way of discourse, he told me that, twenty years before, when he first came to the country, a man with great industry might get on: but at present the whole affair was overdone; unless indeed, in the way of daring speculation, which required *money* , either of our own or other people's; and even for such as have that, America presented no advantages which Europe could not afford; along with that, there was the disadvantage of dwelling in a land of foreigners, “for foreign,” he said, “you will find them to the end of the chapter.” 55 He said that he had travelled far and wide, in the way of business, and that he had met with hundreds of our countrymen who would gladly return home; but were restrained, either not liking the idea of returning home poorer than they left it, or positively lacking the means; the golden bridge of retreat, as it were, being broken down behind them. I found that what I had heard from him, notwithstanding its ludicrous tone at first, contained matter for rather grave consideration, and that it was insensibly affecting my spirits; my friend W—r perceived this, and considerately changed the subject. As we had both letters to write that night to go by the packet, I happened to express my admiration of the invention and regularity of post-office communication; yet how little the convenience was thought of or appreciated by many. I remarked to him, that when I dropped a letter into the dark corner of an American letter-box, to come to light in due time on the further side of the broad Atlantic—at such times I could not help calling to mind the old story of the river Alpheus, which, losing itself in the territory of Achaia, re-appeared in Sicily, and faithfully carried thither whatever might be committed to its current. He said he should not like to trust a letter to such a conveyance, and said that people might have even too favourable an opinion of the powers of the post-office itself. He instanced in proof the case of a half-witted fellow in Belfast, well known there in W—r's young days. This man

had learned to read, 56 but was often entrusted with letters and parcels to be taken from one part of the town to another. One day, having been sent by somebody with a quantity of sprats, he unluckily forgot the address of the party who was to receive them; and as he had often seen numberless small packets put into the receiving-box of the penny-post (then newly established in that town), every one of which had come safe to hand, he stood up, and deliberately emptied his fish-basket by small handfuls into the receptacle for letters, till it was quite choked up. Finding it would hold no more, he walked into the post-office, and reproached the astonished officials for having so small and inconvenient a box! Finding me laugh at this blunder of his countryman, he followed it up by an anecdote of one of his country-women, a servant girl—for Irish menials abound in American families which cannot afford to hire others. He assured me it was a fact, and that he knew the parties well:—“A genuine *bog-trottress* , of pure Milesian breed, and as raw,” to use W—r's words, as “an under-boiled potatoe, was set by her mistress to cook some lobsters, to be eaten in the evening at a supper party. Some time after they had been put on the fire, her mistress sent her to look how they got on; she soon returned, with staring eyes, looking like one bewitched, and said “the deevil's flown away wi' the durty craturs, for sorrow a bit could she find o' them.” The lady, sure enough, on looking into the pot, found nothing there but boiling-water. The fact was, the animals had 57 been put into *cold* water, and as that gradually heated they began to dislike their position, and so the one nearest the top of the unlidded pot had probably thrust out his readiest claw and got on to the ground: the others following the example—it must have been a general *sauve qui peut;* they were found, some under the bed,—one having stept into a nameless vase to cool himself—some here and some there—in short in every place but where well-brought-up lobsters ought to be.” I thought the story the less improbable as it took place in New York, where I may mention, by the way, fishmongers' shops are few or none. Amateurs of shell and other fish generally are taken to the harbour, one portion of which is fitted up with a well constructed piscinium, being a kind of floating frame-work pervious to water, which rises and falls with the tide, and is boxed off into compartments; in these are kept every variety of fish alive, so that an

abundant choice is to be had for the table, and that too at prices more reasonable than the amateur would be made to pay by the London salesmen.

In a few days, my friend W—r sailed for Europe. He parted from me most affectionately, and said he hoped to see me some day in Ireland. Almost his last words were—“I can tell you, you will not stay long in this cursed country; mark what I say—you will find it come true.”

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LETTER VI. EXCURSION TO ALBANY, &C.

Having danced attendance on different individuals for three days, and not seeing my way clearly, I began to grow tired of New York, and thought it would be an agreeable way of spending unavailable time to penetrate a little into the interior; it would give certain gentlemen time to think of some offers of service I had made them, and which they seemed to be in no hurry to give a definite answer to. I accordingly got on board one of the Albany steam-boats, one fine morning, the sun shining bright, and the morning air sweetly pure. There is a peculiar clearness in the atmosphere of America, which has been remarked on by Mrs. Butler. I always thought the stars shone more vividly there than here, and I have seen the moon so dazzlingly bright that it really was painful to look at her; and I believe I saw Halley's comet much more distinctly there than I should have done in Europe.

The Albany steam-boats are of a considerable size, and divided into three stories. The double engines are of great power, and their furnaces fed, not with coal like ours, but with massive pine logs. There is a very well-served ordinary, at a reasonable rate. It is easy to imagine that the dinner party one sits 59 down with must be rather numerous, when it is considered that these boats often convey more than five hundred passengers at one trip. Indeed, it is impossible to accommodate all at one sitting, so that it is necessary to serve each meal twice. The decks of such a vessel present a lively scene. There are waiters,

shoe-blacks, barbers, barmen, cooks, sailors, engineers, stokers, &c., all bustling about as in a crowded street. Still they are by no means the largest steam-boats on the American rivers. In the south-west—on the Mississippi for instance—they are enormous, some of them being full two hundred feet long, and bulky in proportion. These last will sometimes go two thousand miles into the interior. Five thousand persons have passed to or from New York and Albany in a day. It is estimated that no fewer than a million go by them every year. The passage, one hundred and fifty miles, is always made within twelve, and sometimes under ten, hours.

The Hudson runs up into the country in an almost straight line; there is no finer river in the world, so far as it goes, for navigation; it has, indeed, but a short course for an American river of distinction, being only three hundred miles long; while the Mississippi, including the Missouri, descends four thousand four hundred miles before reaching the sea. The latter was always called by the Indians “the parent of waters.” Leaving Hoboken on the left, we pass by Sing-sing, where is the prison for the city of New York; there being but a small building there for the temporary lodging of criminals. 60 But the great state prison is at Auburn, where the criminals are put to hard labour, and all intercourse with each other, either by word or sign. is strictly forbidden. At meals they sit back to back; every look is vigilantly watched, and all infractions of the rule laid down are severely punished; yet even this is not so bad as the solitary-cell system of the Eastern Penitentiary of Pennsylvania. There every prisoner is kept quite apart from his fellows; and never sees any one but his keeper, not even his nearest friends; neither is he permitted to have any communication with his connexions, except at the discretion of the jailer. By such treatment, some, sentenced for long periods, have grown crazy. Conversing with a gentleman on board the steam-boat respecting the effects of these two systems, and contrasting them with the old mode of treatment, he related an anecdote which is curious, as showing the effects of imagination on the human frame.

At the time the cholera was ravaging the States a few years ago, all knowledge of its existence was carefully shut out from the prisoners at Auburn, and not one of them was

ever attacked with it, or likely to be. But it so fell out that, one unlucky Sabbath-day, when the malady had nearly ceased, the chaplain of the prison, in the fulness of his heart, could not help offering up grateful thanks to God for his goodness in staying the ravages of the retiring pestilence. He enlarged too much on the occasion, and with ill-timed eloquence and in strong colours depicted the sad symptoms of what had so 61 long scourged the land. This had such an effect on the minds of the prisoners, that many presently fell sick, and in a few days several died, with unequivocal signs of the most malignant type of cholera.

The stream here rather widens than otherwise, till, about eight miles above New York, a range of high rocks, called the Palisadoes, begins, as it were, to hem in the river. These extend for twenty miles, and some of them rise as high as five hundred feet perpendicular. They are considered, I believe, to be of basaltic origin. They are really not unlike broad palisades, and in some places rise sheer out of the water, presenting as smooth a surface as if cut with the chisel. Beyond these, what is called the Highlands commence, and in the distant horizon are seen the lofty Catskill Mountains, some of the peaks of which run up beyond three thousand feet; as you near them, they seem all covered with verdure to the very tops.

The river continuing to grow gradually narrower, we arrive at Westpoint, remarkable in our times as the seat of the military school for the United States army. Since I saw it, the number of pupils have been considerably increased: at that time the standing army was under 6000 men, garrisons included Westpoint is a strong position, and is the key to the upper part of the province. I saw sentinels, at the landing-place and on the heights, in grey uniforms; and, apparently, no one could pass into the country that way, without being challenged. During the war of independence, it was strongly fortified and jealously 62 guarded; and that shabby modern Coriolanus, General Arnold, made strong interest to obtain the command of it, in order to deliver it to the English. The first part of his plan succeeded, the other failed; and one consequence of it was the sacrifice of the accomplished and brave Major André, who had been chosen to treat with him on the

subject. He saved Arnold's life at the expense of his own. The motive Arnold had for his conduct was not the hope of reward, but the desire of revenge: his self-love had been deeply wounded by the scurvy treatment he received from the Congress. He fled, leaving André to the tender mercies of the immortal Washington, the great patriot and Negro-breeder, who had André hanged in the sight of the British lines, with every circumstance of the most tender regard for that sufferer's feelings.

Not far from Westpoint, among the Highlands, close to the water, is a promontory called “Anthony's Nose,” well known, by name at least, to all readers of Irving's “Knickerbocker.” It is said to present a rude profile of the human face, with a nose of disproportionate size. I could not make it out, either in ascending or descending the river, although I had at least half a dozen people to assist me in the search. The boat sails so rapidly, that if the instant of “projection” is allowed to pass, it is irrecoverable. One village on the right bank, which we have left behind us, is called “Hyde Park;” on the opposite bank, at another spot, is “Athens;” beyond Albany is “Troy;” and back from that again, in the direction 63 of the lakes, is “Rome.” But at present we are nearing a much more interesting place, not famous for its arts or conquests, but for brewing most potent ale: it is Poughkeepsie , a name (in America) beyond all Greek—all Roman fame; and much more American than Palmyra, Paris, Persepolis, &c. Higher up, again, after passing Kingston and many other places, whose names are little known to fame, we arrive at Hudson, a town on our right, which does not shew much river front, but runs a long street some distance into the interior. This town is faced towards the river with some bold rocks.

Here we have got among the beginnings of the Catskill Mountains; and ascending the river, after a number of meanders, we at last arrive in sight of the cupolas of our place of destination— Albany , the most advantageous looking place at a distance I have ever seen. When I first saw it, the sun was declining, and seemed as if about to set behind it. This city, the capital of the state of New York, is built on a mount, sloping down to the river in front, and to the western country behind. The lofty Capitol, which is surmounted with a dome, and some other massive buildings, form a centre, round which the other houses are

closely grouped. Altogether it has a well compacted, noble appearance. The whole, when it first met my view, was, as it were, flooded with the richest colours of dying sun-light; and the metallic plated roofs (the buildings are covered with plates of block tin) reflecting the golden rays, made it have the aspect of some gorgeous oriental city seen in a dream.

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As soon as I had secured lodgings for the night, and taken some refreshment, I walked out to enjoy the beauty of the evening. The moon had risen, full and broad, over the cliffs that face the town on the eastern shore. After admiring the scene for a considerable time, I wandered heedlessly about the town, up one street and down another, penetrating into the country at different points; till at last, it getting late, I bethought me of returning to my hotel. Not having used the precaution to take the name of the house, or that of its proprietor, it was long before I could trace it out. I found that my love of the picturesque had been carried too far: it was nigh midnight before I got into my chamber, and not without rousing the people from their beds.

Next morning I went to see the Capitol. It is as commodious inside as its exterior is noble: it is altogether worthy of a state which numbers a population of more than 2,000,000. It includes the senate house and chamber of representatives, a library adorned with a few portraits in oil of eminent men, a council-chamber, committee and examination rooms, &c. Here, too, is the residence of the Governor, an important officer, invested with greater powers within his jurisdiction than the great President himself. In him resides, for example, the power (in concurrence with the senate) of mitigating the punishments, or granting pardons, of criminals; and it is easy to imagine how much he is importuned by their relations and connexions.

Two rail-road lines lead from the centre of Albany 65 to different places. The coaches that I saw on them were drawn, not by steam power, but by horses. At Albany is the commencement of probably the longest canal in the world, which terminates at Buffalo, on

the shores of Lake Erie, 363 miles distant. It was begun in 1817, and finished in 1825; and executed at the expense of the State of New York, costing nearly £2,000,000 sterling.

Quitting Albany, and following a road close by the side of the Erie Canal, which here runs parallel with the Hudson, after a pleasant walk of four or five miles I arrived at Troy. What resemblance this place may bear to ancient Ilium, so as to entitle it to the name it bears, I know not. Methinks the modern Trojans might have had the modesty to call it New Troy. The mode of ferrying across the Hudson was a kind of novelty to me. At both sides of an immense raft, solid and broad enough to accommodate half a dozen loaded waggons, is placed a horse, each with his head turned diverse ways; they are enclosed in a kind of shed, open at the sides from about mid-height, and when the ferryman gave the word they both commenced walking, but without advancing a single inch, and continued to do so till we had got quite across the river. Every forward movement they made was immediately lost by the retrograde motion of a kind of wheels they were placed on, which all the while kept turning briskly round. Here, then, were two innocent and docile animals put to the tread-mill! This vertical movement F 66 of the side wheels is communicated by means of cranks to a kind of paddles, placed under the bottom of the raft, and thus is the thing cleverly brought about.

I had been much interested by the accounts I had read of the community of the Shakers, and endeavoured to get as much information as possible of that singular society; among whom, as I understood, there was a community of goods, and “neither marrying nor giving in marriage.” I was not a little curious to see such an experiment in full operation. I found they were not well spoken of in New York; nor were they by any means popular in their own neighbourhood, if I may judge by the scandalous anecdotes that were related to me, tending to shew that they do not quite live “even as the angels in heaven.” Their two establishments are neither of them far from that part of the Hudson where I now was; the smaller is at Watervliet, on the eastern side. I thought it best to visit the larger one, near New-Lebanon Springs, which is a kind of dwarf Cheltenham, and much resorted to by company for the sanative powers of its waters, or for pastime. When I arrived at Troy,

from misinformation received at Albany, I found I had missed the morning stage by a full hour. I was invited to take my place in the afternoon coach; but as I saw nothing in Troy to detain me, I determined to push on and let it overtake me on the way. I cannot say I was sorry to arrange the matter thus, being much of the opinion of the author of “Highways and Byways,” that those who 67 are driven over a country in coaches never learn much of it that is worth the knowing.

I had not travelled far, when I saw, at some distance on the road before me, a single traveller with a knapsack on his back, pushing briskly forward on his route. I thought it desirable to have a companion; so, being a tolerably fair walker, I soon joined him, and expressed a wish to know whither he was bound. He was rather shy at first, but we soon got acquainted. He told me he was a Connecticut man, but had been for some years settled at Buffalo, and was then going to see his friends in New England, and arrange some family affairs. He gave me wonderful accounts of the changes that had taken place in Buffalo, from the time he had first known it; how, that from an insignificant village of no account, it had become a flourishing depot, with a great and increasing trade; several daily newspapers were now published there: it seemed to me an extraordinary example of the kind, even for America. Having in my pockets some provision which I had purchased at Troy, and as my companion seemed to be faint and foot-worn, after a while I invited him to take a share with me. There being no tavern near, we sat ourselves down, like the travelling players in Gil Blas, in a shady wood near the road, where, like them, we could, if we chose, “soak our crusts in a spring.” Once more on our way, we became very familiar: nothing brings men closer in mind than social refection of the body. So, as soon as we arrived at a tavern, although I F2 68 much eschewed the dram-drinking habits of the country, he gained his point and got me in. There I found several people of the country; and, in particular, a French Canadian—a thin, sinewy, elderly man, not unlike in person and looks to what we should suppose Scott's Baron of Bradwardine to be. He was one of the kindliest and gayest tempered souls I ever met with.

Understanding I had lately come from the land of his ancestors, he asked me all sorts of ridiculous questions about it, for he seemed as ignorant of its present state as a child; and being a small proprietor in this part of the country, and married to a New Englander, he had not seen Canada for some years: thus opportunities of speaking his mother tongue were rare. and he poured out most peculiar French in a full torrent. Finding me a good listener,—who, in nine instances in ten, is better appreciated than a good speaker—I made great progress in his good graces in a short time: he insisted on taking me home, and introducing me to his wife and daughters, the latter—as he assured me, “belles comme le jour;” I must absolutely pass some days with him, &c. I was not much disinclined to accept his offer, but I had made up my mind to go on to New-Lebanon, it now being Saturday, and I wanted to witness the Shakers' mode of worship next day.

Being loath to part with one another, we had chairs placed for us outside the bar, and our little circle insensibly increased, by individuals dropping in, to a dozen or more. One of them began discussing 69 the merits of a preacher who had been lately itinerating in these parts—no doubt hunting for a church to settle down in comfortably. This is a common thing in America, and such a degrading system is well calculated to create a class of pulpit mountebanks. He had been sorely puzzling the brains of the natives by a fine-spun theory about who Melchizedek may have been—whether he was really the High Priest of Salem who, as recorded in Gen. xiv. 18, came and blessed Abraham on his return from the slaughter of the five kings. The reverend aspirant had preached a long string of discourses to prove that Melchizedek was not a man such as we, but the Saviour; that he was a pre-manifestation of Christ in the flesh. This assertion had sadly perplexed all plain-witted people; and one of my companions, thinking perhaps he saw signs of an inquiring temper in my countenance, gravely submitted the case to me. I, thinking that the starting of such a profitless inquiry by the parson had been only done for the purpose, as Burns would say, of “courting the kintra clash to raise a din,” told them so frankly; adding, that those who indulged in speculations on dark passages of Scripture, were not always the most remarkable for their attention to its plainest precepts. I could not help enlarging on

the subject a little, though divinity is not my forte; and getting heated with the subject, I turned round to “explain” to one behind me, who had made a posing remark, when, to my consternation, I found I had had a crowd of listeners, the whole 70 space between the chairs and the door being literally crammed, door-way included, with people, mostly militia-men of the environs in full uniform: they had been summoned that day to a muster for exercise and firing at a target. Now such an increase in my auditory, had I had the genuine spirit of practised oratory in me, would have given me fresh vigour to continue; but, as for me, it pulled me off “my high horse” in a moment.—Shortly afterwards, the evening stage being now in sight, and darkness coming on, I parted with my kind-hearted friends of an hour; but it was some time before the garrulous Canadian would let go my hand.

The driver of the stage (I do not dare to call him coachman—that would be an insult in America) beside whom I now took my place, was an agreeable, and rather a superior kind of man. Few or none of that class, indeed, are of such a low caste as ours at home. He seemed to be dexterous in his trade too. The road led, in some places, through a wooded country, of a most rugged description. Had I been seated beside some English drivers, going down one declivity and up another, I should have been in terror of my neck; and then the American horses are such docile creatures. I did not, on this occasion, see the man use his whip to them even once, although he spoke to them often, calling each by his name. This person related to me, that, some years before, he was on the point of being buried alive, as it was supposed that he had died of an illness which reduced him very low at that time. In America, 71 the corruption of animal matter is much more rapid, in summer especially, than with us; so that they are obliged to have the bodies of the dead sooner disposed of. He assured me he lay in a kind of trance, having a dreamy kind of consciousness of all that was passing around him, for more than thirty hours. The village doctor, and all his neighbours, with one exception, thought him dead. This last was his most intimate friend, and had been his schoolfellow. The man had his doubts; although, as he declared afterwards, he scarce knew why; he owned all appearances were against the notion that he had so firmly taken up. Meantime, the others laughed him to scorn, when

he obstinately persisted in not allowing the supposed defunct to be inclosed for burial The coffin was prepared, and the patient's friend about to give way, when the body showed unequivocal outward signs of animation—inward consciousness the patient had never lost for a moment: he was not aware even of having slept. I asked him if he had been perfectly acquainted with what was going on about him. He positively declared he had; but that his sensations were all passive. He heard them talk of his funeral, and discuss the particulars; he listened to the remonstrances with his friend, his answers, and every thing that passed on the occasion; but although he knew it was all about him, and concerned him so nearly, he did not feel as if he had the desire, much less the power, to get up and interfere! I had read of some remarkable cases 72 of this sort, as narrated in books: but never fell in with any one whose personal experience could confirm or contradict their existence, till I fell in with the driver of the stage between Albany and Nassau.

73

LETTER VII. NEW LEBANON SPRINGS—THE SHAKERS.

At Nassau, two miles from New Lebanon, we changed our driver. As I did not like his appearance quite so well as that of my “dead alive,” I got inside, where I encountered an elderly man, with a gruff voice, who I could only see was fat, and who annoyed me greatly with questions, whether I was “a traveller, or a clergyman, or a merchant, or a mechanic, or”—I stopped him here, thinking he might go even lower in his conjectures as to what I might be, and said to him, “My good sir, just imagine that I am nothing at all—that I am nobody.” I was not aware, at that time, that the term “mechanic” has a different meaning there than with us: it is generally applied to master tradesmen in different callings, especially workers in metal, such as machinists, brass-founders, and the like; also to engineers, railroad-contractors, &c. This man, whose property he said lay near, soon got down and left us. I was not sorry for his absence. I could have been glad that he had left his daughter behind him, who was a well-spoken young lady; whether her person were as agreeable as her conversation, I cannot say.

74

The watering-place, called New Lebanon Springs, is built on the top of a hill, of gentle ascent. It is composed of a bathing-house, and three very extensive and stately taverns, forming a kind of square; its conspicuous position upon a hill, like “a city that cannot be hid,” at a distance, with the hundred shifting lights in the windows, gave it the appearance of some illuminated palace in a theatrical scene; a comparison that was still further helped by the sounds of music and revelry which fell upon the ear as we approached it. Having taken up my quarters at one of the taverns, I found myself in the midst of the gayest company I had yet mixed with in America. It is a resort for many invalids to get rid of cutaneous and other diseases, in the first of which the waters are said to be very useful; but a much greater number repair thither to shake off the spleen, or idlers, who merely come to kill time. It is, in short, a place of innocent dissipation. Although not of the gayest turn of mind myself, I have always been, like Goldsmith's Doctor Primrose, an admirer of happy faces; and here there was a freedom of intercourse, a forgetfulness of the cares of life, an oblivion of its distinctions, all reigning about this charming spot, which it was quite delightful to meet with, and what I hardly expected to find, and indeed never did find afterward, in any part of America. Numbers of the young ladies—some with their parents, but mostly with their sweethearts-tired with much dancing in the concert-room, were walking about the grounds, 75 pleasantly laid out garden-fashion, in the centre area of the buildings; the *stoup* or colonnade in front of the taverns had rows of chairs for gentlemen; and there sat the latter smoking discussing lightsomely their own affairs or those of the nation, and all the world enjoying itself in its own way. But the telltale moonlight, which shone bright over all, showed me lady arms twined round favoured necks, with a most loving simplicity that thought no ill. These pairs moved about jauntily, keeping time in their steps to the cadence of imaginary music, the instruments, having now ceased. It grew late, but no one seemed to think of going to rest: how could they, and leave such a bright shining moon behind! Although I have been, in my time, rather scurvily treated by many individuals of my species, there *have been* moments when my heart has swelled within me with such an expansion of love to human kind, that I thought I could lodge the whole race within its core: such a feeling as this did I experience, for instance, when the

French people showed such heroism in combat with so much moderation after victory in the early days of their last Revolution. But the subsequent conduct of many of them made the heart, thus expanded, soon contract again. It was then I first got acquainted with the delicious sentiment of Loyalty , a feeling quite new to me; and which, if only inferior in strength to the love of woman, is much purer in its nature. Let Louis Philippe have been an intriguing usurper or not, he was a man whose talents and general character, 76 apart from his ambition, were well worthy of respect and affection. If many soon turned against the man of their choice, I at least, who took as great an interest in their happiness as a foreigner could do, stood firm by those who maintained their integrity. To a man who has been jostled about in the lower thoroughfares of life, such sensations as I have described can come but rarely—they are holiday, not every-day feelings—yet let not the titled or the prosperous impute the rarity of such kindly visitations of the soul in their humbler fellow-men to insensibility of heart, or to a cold, unsympathizing spirit. No! it is the bitter knowledge, the daily experience, of the conduct of certain characters—the cruel, habitual subjection to base, tyrannical natures, that sullen the mind, and sour the temper of the otherwise amiable portions of the lower class. Ah! they who bask in the sunshine of the upper waters, know not of the creeping things they would be crawled over by, if their fate had confined them to the lower regions of the ocean of life.

In moments of pain and sorrow, in the desolation of a dejected soul, in the dreariness of enforced solitude, when I wish to expel from my mind the gloomy sensations of the intolerable present by pictures of the agreeable past, I shall always recall to mind the evening I passed at Lebanon Springs.

Early next morning, which was Sunday, I got up to have a look at the healing waters. I found twenty or thirty people assembled around them, and drinking them by large tumblers-full, being used both inwardly 77 and outwardly. It is the most remarkable water I have ever seen for clearness. The bottom of the reservoir was lined with a shining silvery grey-coloured deposite; and the fluid over it so transparent, that at a few feet distance it was difficult to believe there could be water there at all. Thin wreaths of smoke

curled lightly over the reservoir's mouth. This hot spring issues from a rock, with a flow of eighteen barrels a minute. Part of the water is carried, by means of pipes, into the baths hard by.

Besides the large taverns on Mount-Lebanon, there are several smaller buildings, such as out-houses, and a considerable dairy farm. The view from this place, over the country, especially towards the west, is very extensive and beautiful. Besides some intermediate villages, it includes the town of Nassau and a tolerable expanse of country beyond, but is intercepted by the high land that shuts up the Hudson in the direction of Troy and Saratoga; the latter is famous for its waters also, and well known to us by the mortifying surrender of Burgoyne and his army to the Americans. To the north are the Catskill Mountains, ranged like a long line of giants, the nearer peaks darkly green, this further fading into different tints of blue. And in this direction, to the right and near to the spectator, are the broad slopes of other hills of inferior height, extending from east to west with a long sweep, covered with forests of funereal-looking pine. Here and there the roofs of small wooden dwellings peep forth; the thin blue early morning smoke, when I saw them, beginning to rise: 78 there are but few of these, and they only slightly break the sombre monotony of the scene Not a sound arises from this part of the landscape. The “song of early bird” is no where to be heard. It is the Sabbath, and one would think that nature herself rested from her labours. I have often had occasion to remark the stillness of American scenery. Of singing birds, wherever I have been, there is a great scarcity. There are no skylarks; neither are there any daisies! can the country ever be poetical? On this occasion I could see no fowls in the air, nor animals of any kind in the woods; excepting now and then a ground-squirrel, which, it must be owned, are pretty little creatures, but very shy. Even the crows and rooks of England are wanting, whose noisy presence would be most desirable to break up the stillness that surrounds one on every side. The absence of hedge-rows is another cause of baldness in their landscapes. The mode of fencing differs in different parts of America. In the upper portion of the State of New York, where I now was (at a short distance from the western boundary line of Connecticut), the fields

are inclosed with zigzag fences. They are composed of long stakes placed horizontally, their points crossing and forming a series of obtuse angles, raised upon rails driven into the ground. At a distance, looking at them from above, they present an outline such as you see traced on the engraved plans of fortifications. Three miles off, but to the north-west, the buildings hid from view by an interposing hill crowned with wood, is the great Shaker establishment. The upper parts of 79 their farms are, however, in sight, and in an admirable state of cultivation they are said to be.

Having breakfasted early at the tavern, along with some twenty persons, mostly gentlemen —few of the ladies being visible as yet—I set out to visit the Shakers. After a circuitous walk of three miles, I found myself in front of their meeting house. It is a plain square building, having the exterior of a large riding-house. It was not yet opened. Opposite to it, the high road passing between, is the Trustees' house—a substantially-built and very neat structure, two stories high; such a place as would be fit for the residence of an English gentleman of moderate fortune. This building, with the meeting-house, school-house, &c. stands on rising ground, which still continues to ascend till it ends in a woody ridge. The descending ground, whereon stands the meeting house, ends in a hollow, inclosing various mills and workshops advantageously placed about a stream which there runs, so as to make its water-power available. As for the dwellings of the brethren, owing to the undulating surface of the land, scarce one is visible from the spot I have been trying to describe; they are scattered up and down in all directions, on the different farms. Having no one to point out the property to me, or give me any authentic information about the society, I inquired of one of the first brothers I met whether the establishment could be seen that day; he answered me briefly, but civilly, that Sunday was an inconvenient day but 80 that if I were only “curious to see their worship,” the meeting house would be opened in an hour or two. I told him that was not all I wanted; that I had come from afar, and wished to get as much information as they were willing to give. After some slight hesitation, he knocked at the door of the head-quarters, and it was opened by “a sister,” an elderly female, who showed me up to “the Elder.” This was a middle-aged man, shrewd-

looking and intelligent, with an intellectual forehead and penetrating eye. He seemed a perfect man of the world, and was of ready speech, having certainly nothing of the enthusiast in looks, manners, or conversation. He asked me what I wanted with him. I made an apology for coming on such a day, when, as I had just heard, it was not usual for visitors to be received; but that I had come from abroad, was pressed for time, as I was obliged to hasten back to New York, &c. He told me it was not possible for him to show me the working part of the establishment, nor the grounds, because it was with them a day of absolute rest, and therefore he had no one to send with me; but he would willingly shew me the government house; which he thereupon did, and took me through the different rooms himself, with unceremonious civility. They were all well and substantially, though plainly furnished, and particularly neat and clean—the whole a model of order and comfort. The *pierre de touche* of a house is its kitchen; and none in London could exceed theirs in neatness of equipment. If 81 the great business of life be to live well, in one sense of these words no means or appliances are wanting in the premises set apart for “the elders and trustees of the people called Shaking Quakers.” One apartment, which he called “the store,” was full of articles, of light manufacture, for sale to visitors or others, mostly the handiwork of the sisters, such as baskets, cradles, and the like, with packets and samples of various kinds of seeds and grain, plants, bundles of healing herbs, &c. He assured me, these were in great request in most parts of the country around, and their sale added considerably to the general funds; also, that the general produce of their fields and dairies had a higher value in the market than that of other producers. Next to the store, he shewed me the laboratory. He told me that more than one of the “brothers” had studied medicine; and that they had everything “within themselves,” even to a printing house.

We now returned to the sitting room, and he seemed to be preparing to leave me; but I had a similar desire to that of Voltaire, who, in his Travels in England, relates, that he asked Thomas White of London, a leading Quaker, to whom he was introduced, “to be good enough to instruct him in his religion:” I expressed to my Shaker, though in less direct terms, a similar wish. He asked me, fixing his keen eyes on mine, if ever I had heard

anything remarkable about them in my own country, before. I said I had not, excepting, some slight accounts I G 82 had read in books of tourists, who all treated the subject in a strain of levity that had induced me to put little trust in them. He said that his duties would prevent him, for the present, from gratifying my desire; but that it was a pity I was so urgent, as I was welcome to call next day, or whenever it suited me, and that then he, or some other to whom he would mention my desire, would give me every reasonable explanation. “In the meantime,” said he, directing my attention to a heavy octavo volume lying on the table, “there is a book which will tell thee more about our people than I can. And here again is a little work, lately sent forth by us, in our own defence, which will explain some things that concern us; should thou never find time to read it, it will be as remembrance to thee—of my brethren I was going to say, but they are thine also;” so saying, he put into my hand a small pamphlet of 36 pages 12mo. “To-day,” said he, “thou mayst see, if thou wilt, a kind of worship which will be altogether new to thee. The hour of meeting will soon arrive, and so I must leave thee; but take thy seat at that window, and thou mayst turn the interval to profit by perusing the volume I have shewn thee.” So saying, he left me.—I here copy the title of the Shakers' pamphlet, thus kindly given; it was drawn up on occasion of some attacks made upon them by the State legislature: “A brief Exposition of the established Principles and Regulations of the United Society of Believers called Shakers. O magna vis veritatis! Cic. ‘The power of truth is great, it must and will prevail, 83 When false reports shall cease, and sland'rous tongues shall fail.’”

The reader will see, by extracts appended to this letter, that the government of this singular community is founded on the purest moral and religious principles; if they at all act up to what they profess, it might be a good thing for the world that Shaker establishments were more common. It is true I heard some scandalous anecdotes about them in their own neighbourhood, of clandestine connections between certain brothers and sisters, and how that children had been born and made away with, &c. &c.; but such stories are sure to get abroad, whether well founded or not. Their pretensions to greater purity of life than others—both sexes living “even as the angels in heaven”—expose them naturally to

animadversion; besides, their great prosperity is enough to make them envied by most, and hated by many. The motto they chose for their pamphlet contains a consoling, yet false assertion, that we confidingly read in the books of philosophers when young; but which our experience of the world afterwards obliges us, with a sigh, to refuse our assent to. How many times do good men descend to their graves, overborne with calumnies, which few ever take the trouble to examine into? If tardy justice is sometimes done to the injured in this world, (and this world was all that the ancient sophist's aphorism could refer to), such justice is so rarely done, as to form no rule, but is rather the exception. Most people are ever eager G 2 84 to listen to what makes against their neighbours, and hear with listlessness or impatience what can be said in their behalf. A remarkable instance of this occurred with respect to these same Shakers, which sufficiently proved that their Latin motto (Ciceronian though it may be) enounces a “vulgar error.” A few months after my visit to them, one of the elders formed an attachment to a sister, and they agreed to leave the community and get married. He had a right to do so, and none of his brethren objected to it. He gave proper notice to his colleagues months before he left, arranged his affairs, and parted with every one on the most amicable terms; at the same time quitting the community poorer than he entered it, for he took away no money, except a present given to him by his brethren—not as a *right* , for they recognize no claims of restitution, but as a testimony of their respect. Well: an Albany journal, immediately getting false information of the affair from some “kind neighbours” of the Shakers, roundly asserted that their principal trustee, “the keeper of the bag,” had, Judas-like, betrayed his trust, and run off with the prettiest of all the young sisters, and an immense sum of money besides! Immediately, this slander was eagerly copied into more than a thousand other lying newspapers of the United States. The individual in question (who may have been the very man whose conversation with me I have reported above) immediately wrote an indignant contradiction to a leading journal of New York. Not more than half a dozen out of the thousand 85 just mentioned ever took the least notice of it; and thus up to this time, and probably for ever, a respectable man is believed by millions of his countrymen to be a consummate scoundrel. “Magna est veritas, et prævalebit!” It will indeed prevail

a bit , and a very small one too. No, no, unhappily slanderous tongues will never “fail.” But these were after reflections: meantime I set myself seriously to read the heavy book he spoke of, which was a most voluminous history of the Shakers, from the time of their first foundation by Ann Lee, the wife of an English blacksmith. That good old lady, finding that prophetesses have no honour in their own country, left Toad-lane in Manchester, and came to America in 1774, probably finding our little island too small for her. In Toad-lane she had already dreamed dreams and seen visions; but few attended to them; while in America her accounts of them were listened to with respect. By and by, the believers formed a sect, and various supposed manifestations of the Spirit shone forth in others of the members. The ground on which the Shakers go, as well as most other enthusiasts —as, for instance, the French convulsionaries of the past, and the “unknown tongue” visionaries of the present century, is this—that no where in Scripture is it said, that spiritual gifts ceased with the Apostles. Accordingly, long details are given in the above-mentioned work, which, though related in earnest language, and with a plausible circumstantiality, yet seem quite ludicrous to one who is “of the world, worldly.” I could only dip here and 86 there into such a massive volume, which contained full 700 closely printed 8vo. pages; for, independent of the absurdity of the subject, my attention was ever and anon diverted from it, by the scene passing outside. As the hour of service approached, a flock of visitors began to arrive, some on foot, but mostly in carriages. No less than three stages came, full of ladies and gentlemen, from Lebanon Springs alone. Presently came “brothers and sisters” in quicksuccession: they were mostly conveyed in well-built spring carts, and all dressed in the same sober uniform; which is even plainer than that of the Quakers, and as spotlessly clean. The men wore old-fashioned square-cut fustian frock coats; plain fronted shirts, without collars; some few with ample cravats, but mostly without. The women wore a dress of light greyish fawn-coloured stuff, fashioned in such a way as to hide as much as possible the contour of the body, and make all the sisters appear of one shape. They wore very high-heeled shoes, which added considerably to the height of their persons; and, being generally lean, and destitute of any projections to break their straight poplar-tree-like outline, gave most of them, when they stood up, the appearance of the ghosts

of giantesses. Most of their complexions were pale, and their looks universally downcast and melancholy. At first they took their places on long forms ranged under the walls to the right; over their heads was a long row of pegs for bonnets; their head pieces were of a shape like that of our coal scoops, with retrenched handles; the material they were made 87 of was apparently some cheap cotton fabric, and its colour a slaty grey. Similarly ranged, on the opposite side to them, sat the brethren, each under the shadow, not of his own fig-tree, but of an immense broad-brimmed hat of plaited straw; and a useful article this is, too, in summer. The position and look they assumed was the same as that of the sisters; and the hands of all were disposed in a convenient fashion for what is called *thumb twaddling* .

The visitors had entered by side doors in front of the building—the ladies by one door, the gentlemen by another; the same separation of sexes being observed for the audience as for the performers. The latter sat sidewards to the rows of the sisters, the former were similarly placed as to the brethren; and we were ranged on seats sloping down from the entrywall for a short way into the room. Behind the sisters was their door of entry; the brethren entered from behind also, but the door of the latter led into a side-room, like a vestry: thus were all parties kept separate. There were about one hundred and fifty men, and, as near as may be, the same number of women. The spectators were full two hundred, occupying but a small space.

After the doors were shut, a dead stillness prevailed among the members for ten or fifteen minutes, and the silence was maintained unbroken by us also. All at once we were startled by a man's rising up with a sudden jerk; the others got on their legs, in an instant; and, after taking off hats, hanging them up, and stripping themselves to their shirts, they huddled 88 the chairs together, and drew up in a long line. A similar operation was going on among the sisters—omitting the stripping; they unbonnetted, however, and taking off their tiny shawls, stood up opposite to the men. These confronting lines were not parallel, but rather angular, so as to increase their length, the open part of the angle being that nearest to us. No two lines were ever more admirably *dressed* by any drill-serjeant.

Midway between the ranks, stood a select band of women, about a dozen or so, upon whom, as on a pivot, the whole machinery of the evolutions that followed seemed to turn. They always sung (or screamed) the loudest, and gesticulated the most energetically. They were like the, *fuglemen* to a regiment when it is exercised. But let us take things in their order.

The two parties stood as immovable as a long avenue of statues, with eyes fixed on the ground, for full five minutes; at the end of that time symptoms of life began to manifest themselves by a kind of spasmodic projecting and retracting of some of the sisters' toes, which presently spread along the whole female line, and then communicated itself to the men by a quick infection; to this was soon added an astounding yell, the starting-note of a kind of ranting hymn, uttered by the strongest voice of the centre band, which was immediately caught up by all; and off they set, in a kind of singing gallopade. The same words were, no doubt, sung by every one; but the confusion of so many voices, some not keeping exact time, made it difficult to hear them connectedly. 89 They rang the changes, however, very often on the following lines—

“In day of doom will Jesus come To save my soul alive! To save my soul alive!”

Their style of singing, I am almost ashamed to say, made me think directly of Signor Corri, (for even in the most sacred places will profane thoughts now and then intrude.) This singer, while in England, one day passing near a meeting-house of Ranters, while voicing an uproarious hymn, put his hands in his sensitive Italian ears, and asked, with a look of dismay, “Vat deese peoples vere dooin.” Being told they were singing the praises of God, he rejoined, “Den dey must tink he haf ver' bad ear.”

The hymn, or whatever it were, of the Shakers, was “a joyful noise” to the letter. All this while the brothers and sisters were moving about, sometimes in circles, at other times in ellipses; one while the brothers stood still and let the sisters whirl round them; otherwhiles the reverse; but however the figure changed, there was never any commingling of sexes.

Both had their arms drawn close to their bodies, leaving the hands sticking out in a strange manner; and with these last, like a turtle's fins, they kept *flapping* time to the quick measure of their song. Meantime, loudest and most active in all this were the centre band of women. Many of them were quite hoarse before it was concluded. There they stood, like the axis of a wheel, while round them moved the wide circumference of this “periodical 90 fit of distraction,” as douce old David Deans would say. At last, with every appearance of fatigue and lassitude, again they sat down, and a dead silence reigned for fifteen minutes or so. Then the Spirit moved a man to get up and speak. He was evidently a “weak brother.” His rambling unintelligible discourse united the two essentials of bad oratory, being at once extravagant and dull. It was really what old Colonel Crockett would have called a strain of “almighty twaddle.” When he had ceased, after a reasonable pause another got up. This was a speaker altogether of a different stamp; but his discourse was much more addressed to us than to his own people. He intimated, among other things, while deprecating the contempt of the world for his community, that it contained in its body some who had been well considered by that world they had renounced for ever; it was not because the world despised *them* that they left a distinguished place in its ranks: it was because they despised it, on account of its vanity its nothingness, its total insufficiency, with all its allurements, to satisfy a reasonable soul. So long as he confined himself to this part of his subject, he spoke with easy fluency and great feeling. I strongly suspected, indeed, that he alluded, in much of what he said on this head, to himself; but when he came to treat of the peculiar notions of the Shakers, there was a sad falling off:—he sank at once into downright rigmarole. The following was the sum of this part of his discourse:—Jesus Christ was man only, though inspired of God. He lived a 91 pure life in this world by the Divine assistance. Ordinary mortals were not favoured with that assistance, at least to so great an extent, and therefore could not reach the same perfection that he did; but, by retiring from the world, and living a life of celibacy, it was still possible to attain to a great, though inferior, degree of purity—even to make human beings in the end fit for the society of angels in heaven.

After having conveyed this kilderkin of meaning in a tun of words, he suddenly stopped, and sat down; then there was silence again for a quarter of an hour. The “Spirit” moving no one else to speak, the affair closed as it had begun, only to another tune which was of a slower measure; but carefully kept time to, with the same wagging of *fins* as before: the figures also were a little different, and of course having a less dizzying effect on the spectator's head. No bible, or psalter-book, indeed no book of any kind, was used, nor prayers offered up; all was either extempore or learned by heart; how-beit their evolutions must have been well practised, for they were as perfect as those of dancing on a stage. When this second vocal gallopade was finished, the doors were thrown open, and the meeting broke up. The sisters immediately departed; the majority of them got into spring-carts, and in these were driven home by one or other of the brethren. Those of the latter who remained, dispersed into little groups, probably discussing the merits of the 92 speakers; and I, observing that they shunned contact with “the world” to which I belonged, and having no hope of further edification or amusement, took a first and last farewell of the Shakers.

EXTRACTS FROM A SHAKER PAMPHLET, DATED NEW-LEBANON, MARCH 15, 1830, AND SIGNED “CALVIN GREEN, AND SETH Y. WELLS.”

“ Many erroneous opinions are entertained concerning the people generally known by the name of Shakers, which are calculated to mislead the public mind, in respect to the true character of this *Society* . The following are the—

Faith and Principles of the Society.

1. A life of *innocence* and *purity*, according to the example of Jesus Christ and his first true followers; implying entire abstinence from all sensual and carnal gratifications.

2. Love.—“By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples if ye have love one to another.—Love is the fulfilling of the law.” This is our bond of union.

3. Peace.—“Follow peace with all men,” is a Divine precept; hence our abstinence from war and bloodshed, from all acts of violence towards our fellow men, from all the party contentions and politics of the world, and from all the pursuits of pride and worldly ambition.—“My kingdom [said Christ] is not of this world.”

4. Justice.—“Render to every man his due.—Owe no man any thing, but to love one another.” We are to be just and honest in all our dealings with mankind, to discharge all just dues, duties, and equitable claims, as seasonably and effectually as possible.

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5. Holiness.—“Without which no man shall see the Lord.” Which signifies to be *consecrated*, or set apart from a common to a sacred use. Hence arise all our doctrines and practical rules of dedicating our persons, services, and property to social and sacred uses, having adopted the example of the first Gospel Church, in establishing and supporting one *consecrated* and *united* interest by the voluntary choice of every member, as a sacred privilege, and not by an undue constraint or persuasion.

6. Goodness.—Do good to all men, as far as opportunity and ability may serve, by administering acts of charity and kindness, and promoting light and truth among mankind. “Whatsoever ye would that men Should do to you, do ye even so to them.”

7. Truth.—This principle is opposed to falsehood, lying, deceit, and hypocrisy; and implies fidelity, reality, good, earnest sincerity, and punctuality in keeping vows and promises. These principles are the genuine basis of our institution, planted by its first founders, exhibited in all our public writings, justified by Scripture and fair reason, and practically commended as a system of morality and religion, adapted to the best interest and happiness of man, both here and hereafter.

Manner of Admitting Members.

1. All persons who unite with this Society, in any degree, must do it freely and voluntarily, according to their own faith and unbiassed judgment.

2. In the testimony of the Society, both public and private, no flattery nor any undue influence is used; but the most plain and explicit statements of its faith and principles are laid before the inquirer; so that the whole ground may be comprehended, as far as possible, by every candidate for admission.

3. No considerations of property are ever made use of by this Society, to induce any person to join it, nor to prevent any one from leaving it; because it is our faith, 94 that no act of devotion or service that does not flow from the free and voluntary emotions of the heart, can be acceptable to God as an act of true religion.

4. No believing husband or wife is allowed, by the principles of this Society, to separate from an unbelieving partner, except by mutual agreement; unless the conduct of the unbeliever be such as to warrant a separation by the laws of God and man. Nor can any husband or wife, who has otherwise abandoned his or her partner, be received into communion with the Society.

5. Any person becoming a member, must rectify all his wrongs, and, as fast and as far as it is in his power, discharge all just and legal claims, whether of creditors or filial heirs. Nor can any person, not conforming to this rule, long remain in union with the Society. But the Society is not responsible for the debts of any individual, except by agreement; because such responsibility would involve a principle ruinous to the institution.

6. No difference is to be made in the distribution of parental estate among the heirs, whether they belong to the Society or not; but an equal partition must be made, as far as may be practicable and consistent with reason and justice.

7. If an unbelieving wife separate from a believing husband, by agreement, the husband must give her a just and reasonable share of the property; and if they have children

who have arrived to years of understanding sufficient to judge for themselves, and who chose to go with their mother, they are not to be disinherited on that account. Though the character of this institution has been much censured on this ground, yet we boldly assert that the rule above stated has never, to our knowledge, been violated by this Society.

8. Industry, temperance, and frugality, are prominent features of this institution. No member who is able to labour, can be permitted to live idly upon the labours of others. All are required to be employed in some manual occupation, according to their several 95 abilities, when not engaged in other necessary duties.

Manner of Government.

1. The effective basis of the government, and which is the support of all its institutions, is the faith, voluntary choice, union, and general approbation of the members. . . .

2. The leading authority of the Society is vested in a Ministry, generally consisting of four persons, including both sexes. These, together with the Elders and Trustees, constitute the general government of the Society in all its branches: and being supported by the general union and approbation of the members, are invested with power to appoint their successors and other subordinate officers, as occasion may require; to counsel, advise, and direct in all matters, whether of a spiritual or temporal nature; to superintend the concerns of the several families, and establish all needful orders, rules, and regulations for the direction and protection of the several branches of the Society; but no rule can be made, nor any member assume a lead, contrary to the original faith and known principles of the Society. . . .

3. No creed can be framed to limit the progress of improvement. It is the faith of the Society, that the operations of Divine light are unlimited. All are at liberty to improve their talents and exercise their gifts, the younger being subject to the elder, and all in concert with the general lead.

4. In the order and government of the Society, no corporal punishment is approved; nor any external force or violence exercised on any rational person who has come to years of understanding. . . . .

5. The management of temporal affairs, in families holding a united interest, as far as respects the consecrated property of the Society, is committed to trustees. These are appointed by the Ministry and Elders; and being supported as aforesaid, are legally invested with the fee of the real estate belonging to the Society. . . .

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This community is divided into several different branches, commonly called families. There are three classes, or progressive degrees of order, as follows:

The first, or novitiate class, are those who receive faith, and come into a degree of relation with the Society, but chuse to live in their own families, and manage their own temporal concerns. Any who chuse may live in that manner, and be owned as brethren and sisters in the Gospel, so long as they live up to its requirements.

Parents are required to be kind and dutiful to each other; to shun every appearance of evil; provide for their family; bring up their children in a godly manner; use, improve and dispose of their property wisely; and manage their affairs according to their own discretion. —They may thus continue as long as it comports with their faith, their circumstances, and their spiritual improvement. But they are required to bear in mind the necessity and importance of a spiritual increase, without which they are ever exposed to fall back into the course and spirit of the world; and they can hold their connection with the Society no longer than they continue to conform to its religious faith and principles.

No children are ever taken under the immediate charge of the Society, except with the request or free consent of those who have the lawful right and control of them, together with the child's own consent. But few, comparatively, are admitted.

Those taken into the Society are treated with care and tenderness, receive a good school education, according to their genius, are trained to industry and virtuous habits, restrained from vice, and at a suitable age led into the knowledge of the Sacred Scriptures, and practically taught the Divine precepts contained in them, particularly those of Jesus Christ and the Apostles.

The second, or junior class, is composed of persons who, not having the charge of families, and being under no embarrassments to hinder them from uniting together 97 in community order, chose to enjoy the benefits of that situation. . . All the members of such families are mutually benefited by the united interest and labours of the whole family, so long as they continue to support the order thereof; and they are amply provided for in health, sickness, and old age. These benefits are secured to them by contract.

The third, or senior class, is composed of such persons as have had sufficient time and opportunity practically to prove the faith and manner of life practised in the Society, and are thus prepared to enter fully, freely, and voluntarily, into a united and consecrated interest. These covenant and agree to dedicate and devote themselves and services, with all that they possess, to the service of God and the support of the Gospel for ever, solemnly promising never to bring debt or damage, claim or demand, against the Society, nor against any member thereof, for any property or service which they have thus devoted to the uses and purposes of the institution. This class constitutes what is called church order, or church relation.

To enter fully into this order, is considered by the Society to be a matter of the utmost importance to the parties concerned, and therefore requires the most mature and deliberate consideration; for after having made such a dedication, according to the laws of justice and equity, there can be no ground for retraction. Nor can they, by those laws, recover any thing whatever which has been thus dedicated. Of this all are fully apprised before entering into the contract. Yet should any afterward withdraw, the trustees have discretionary power to bestow upon them whatever may be thought reasonable, not on the

ground of any just or legal claim, but merely as an act of charity. No person, however, who withdraws peaceably, is sent away empty.

Children taken into the order of the church, are treated with care and tenderness. The practical H 98 exercise of mildness and gentleness of manners, is early arid carefully cultivated among them. All churlishness and moroseness of temper, all harshness of language, all rough, unfeeling behaviour, all unkind and uncivil deportment, and all mischievous and wicked propensities, are cautiously watched and reproved. Great pains are taken to lead them into the practical exercise of truth, honesty, kindness, benevolence, humanity, and every moral virtue. The duties of obedience to their instructors, respect to their superiors, reverence to the aged, and kindness and civility to all, are strictly enjoined upon them.

A good common school education is carefully provided for them, in which it is acknowledged that they generally excel children of their own age in the common schools of the country. Where traits of genius are discovered, their privilege of instruction, as occasion requires, is proportionably extended. They are early led into the knowledge of the Sacred Scriptures, instructed in their history, and practically taught the Divine precepts contained in them, particularly those of Jesus Christ and his apostles. They are always brought up to some manual occupation, by which they may be enabled to obtain a livelihood, whether they remain with the Society or not.

No person can be received into this order until he shall have settled all just and legal claims, both of creditors and filial heirs; so that whatever property he may possess, may be justly and truly his own. The members of this order are all equally entitled to the benefits and privileges thereof, without any difference made on account of what any one may have contributed to the interest of the Society. All are equally entitled to their support and maintenance, and to every necessary comfort, whether in health, sickness, or old age, so long as they continue to maintain the principles, and conform to the orders, rules, and regulations of the institution. 99 They therefore give their property and services for

the most valuable of all temporal considerations: an ample security, during life, for every needful support, if they continue faithful to their contract and covenant, the nature of which they clearly understand before they enter into it.

It may readily be seen, that such an order could not be supported, if its members, on withdrawing, should take whatever they have given, and have the avails of their labours restored to them. They have agreed to give it all to sacred and charitable purposes, claiming nothing but their own support from it. It has been disposed of according to their own desire; and the institution may therefore be no better able to refund it, than if such dedication had never been made. If, therefore, it should be returned to them, it would be literally taking it from those who remain faithful to their covenant, and giving it to covenant breakers. Who cannot see that this would be both unreasonable and unjust?

Notwithstanding all reports to the contrary, we confidently assert that no person has been wronged, by any dedication of property ever made to the purposes of this Society; and that no person whatever has any just or reasonable ground of complaint in this respect. . . .

We believe it will be generally granted, that the history of the world does not furnish a single instance of any religious institution which has stood fifty years without a visible declension of the principles of the institution, in the general purity and integrity of its members. H 2

L. of C.

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LETTER VIII. RETURN TO NEW YORK—A LAND STORM—AMERICAN OPINION OF THE IRISH—CANADIAN AFFAIRS.

It was some time past mid-day before I left the Shakers' meeting-house, the service, or whatever it may be called, having begun at eleven, and ended at twenty minutes past one. I had no inclination to return to Lebanon Springs, whence I could get no conveyance any

where for that day. So I determined to cross the country by a descending line towards the banks of the river Hudson, where, on some part of its shores, I might get on board some of the return steam-boats for New York. My way for some time lay through circuitous bye-roads, which, though not the most convenient, were favourable for getting a view of the country. Being still on the Shaker estate, which extends to a considerable distance all round, I lighted upon several of their cottages, into which I might have been invited had I shewn any inclination, but I determined to push on, fearing that the night might overtake me at a distance from shelter. The general direction of my route was at right angles with the town of Troy and New Lebanon; each limb of the angle, in a straight line, perhaps not exceeding twenty miles; 101 but the road (when I could find one) passed over an almost continued series of heights for full two-thirds of the distance. The general character of the country much resembles the nearer and more fertile parts of the highlands of Scotland in the counties of Perth and Stirling, only much less picturesque. The weather being fine, there were similar hues in the sky, and like clouds sailing gently overhead, but the face of the country was very different: it had the same inanimate look, so new to a stranger, which I have already remarked; and no sound issued from the thick woods of funereal green that clothed to their tops the lofty hills all around.

In a mountainous country water generally abounds; accordingly refreshing little rills trickled across the road, at short intervals, as it wound round the foot of the heights; and here and there, on either hand, rugged dells, where the noise of restless streamlets dashing from rock to rock in their rugged beds, broke the else monotonous stillness with a not unpleasing sound. At last, signs of my being in a Christian country began to shew themselves; testified—not by *gibbets* , according to the well known anecdote—but by taper masts of great elevation, surmounted by the small oval board that universally marks to the distant wayfarer's eye the site of the welcome tavern. By this time I was too tired, what with mounting heights for views, and the heat of the day (for the weather was very close) to reach one without some rest; and finding that the united brooks of this part of the country formed a small lake, of the most limpid 102 water, I bathed in it for some time,

to my great refreshment. Again on my way, I passed through different prettily-situated villages, near mill-sites, romantically placed in hollows conveniently near to water-courses; and, just as evening set in, came to a country road, having at its side a triple fingerpost, with one index pointing to Stockbridge—deservedly famous, if for nothing else, as the residence of Miss Sedgwick, the Edgeworth of America; and another, being the one which just then interested me most, pointing in the direction of the town of Hudson, thence distant about ten miles. Foot-worn as I was, to walk thither could not be: not that the road I had come was a long one as the crow flies, but it was almost one continued series of undulations; and like Dr. Johnson's Obidah, I, too, had “listened to every echo, had mounted every hill for a fresh prospect, had turned aside to every cascade, and pleased myself with tracing the course of streams that rolled among the trees, and watered a large region with innumerable circumvolutions.” Like Obidah's day also, mine was to end in an unexpected storm. Meantime, the pleasing remembrance of the great sage's beautiful narration could not make me forget the condition of my feet, which pained me exceedingly. When I came to examine them, I found three of my toe-nails split, and my stocking-ends soaked in blood. And here, my friend, let me give you and others a bit of advice, founded on experience. Never travel far in a mountainous, or indeed in any country, in *slightly made shoes* . They are light 103 and easy at first, but irksome and heavy in the end.

At the door of a tavern, near to those three roads, stood an unoccupied stage-coach, the horses very busy eating their supper, but their heads turned Hudson-ward. It was the very thing I wanted. I got into it just as the first drops of rain fell, the forerunners of a storm, which, had I been able to foresee it, I should not have thought of confronting. Scarce had we got a mile upon our way, when the rain came down upon us in pitiless torrents. The lightning fires began to kindle up the northern heaven, and the “live thunder” to leap among the mountains underneath. In that quarter, one while earth and sky were swallowed up, as it were, in palpable darkness; while, at short intervals, the ever-renewed lightning blazed, as upon a curtain of the deepest sable, flinging out in bulky relief the huge masses of the Catskill range, couched in grim repose below, like a herd of sleeping behemoths. To

all this, add the roaring of the wind, intermingled with the dashing of angry brooks spurning their boundaries, and flooding the roads far and near. On that side where I was it reached the horses' bellies, and I expected every moment to find the vehicle afloat, or something worse. The American stage-coaches are closed in, not with pannels, but with leathern curtains, and it was as much as I could do by main force to keep the unmitigated storm from pouring in. Otherwise it was the most agreeable side of the machine, as enabling me to peep through the stormward opening. 104 As I stood thus, “holding on,” I could not prevent my vagrant imagination from reverting to the probable position of worthy John Kemble, when he looked through the curtain-slit, at the O.P. “Tempest, scene I.,” when Covent Garden theatre was first opened. As for our tempest, even the driver could not outsit it. He quitted his box, and crept into the coach beside me. The rain by this time had so filled the hollows of our road, that many times our horses came to a stand-still in the flood. Nevertheless the man did not venture out; he tugged at the reins with both hands, for he had passed them through the opening in front. This would rouse them for a while, but soon they came to another obstacle, and there made as decided a halt as the mules in the old coach that ought to have gone on, with the old Abbess of Andouillets and the amiable Margarita.

Such a storm was far too violent to last long. The rain slackened, and erewhile the roaring thunder died away into distant growlings. The evening then became beautifully fine, and we now went on our way with speed. The rain had lasted long enough, however, in the sort of vehicle that I occupied, to drench me to the skin. My lower parts especially were to the full in as wet a state as the famous Judge Blackstone's, when he went that notable humid journey of his on the Welch circuit. It is the only instance of that great man's incontinence on record. He said to his companion, who he thought needlessly dismounted from his horse, “Imitate me, I am in a 105 *pickle;* one may be the warmer for the omission, and can hardly be more wet.” In two hours and three quarters after the stage's regular time, I was set down at a comfortable hotel in the town of Hudson.

Next morning, having pretty well slept away my fatigues, I got on to the wharf at Hudson, in time for the return steam-boat passing that way to New York. I saw nothing remarkable in the town of Hudson; it consists principally of one very long row of houses, not running parallel with, but at a right angle to the river: of course it is not a place for trading. I was told you cannot offer a greater insult to a Hudson man than to ask him what *street* he lives in, there being but one there.—I found some agreeable company on board the steam-boat. Politics formed the staple of the conversation I overheard and mixed in; and they were discussed with greater temper than is common in America amongst people promiscuously met together. There was one gentleman whom I got tolerably intimate with. I remarked he did not say much when the others spoke, but what he did say was pithily put in, and in its sensible way formed a kind of contrast to the mouthy jargon of some of the hot democrats. Such men as he are called Tories in America; but English though the term be, it does not, cannot, carry the same meaning as it does with us. Thus much, however, may be said of this individual—he was a decided “Conservative.” Perhaps he had inherited some of his notions, for he 106 was descended from a family of British loyalists, whose sacrifices for their attachment to their fatherland, he assured me, had been ill requited by our government after the peace of 1783. The affairs of the dear “old country” interested him still. He had no confidence in the Whigs. But the doings of the democratic party in his own country, which he said would, at no distant period, bring it to ruin, formed the chief topic of his discourse. General Jackson (“our Irish president” he called him, from his Irish descent) he looked upon as the curse of his country. He drew an unfavourable parallel between him and Mr. J. Q. Adams, whom he represented to me as one of the most accomplished statesmen that America had ever produced; and asked me what I thought of a people who could set aside such a man (he was president only one term) to make way for such a personage as “Old Hickory.” Before I could answer the appeal made to me, he said, “But it was not *we* who consummated that deadly folly. Sir, we are governed by foreigners.” I asked of what nation? He answered, “principally Irish. That unhappy race, which never could do good for itself and never will for any other people, will, in the end, bring our union to nothing. Well is it named the Land of *Ire* , for, of a surety, the Almighty

made it in his wrath!”—Alluding to some recent political movements in England, he said, “But *your* destruction will come upon you, from the same malign quarter, with a yet swifter wing.” I was staggered for a moment, 107 and did not ask, for some time, what he meant. He resumed:—“‘By their gods ye shall know them.’ What *can* you think of a nation who can be hounded on by that rank charlatan, that archhumbug, that hollow-hearted, most unprincipled of all impostors, Daniel O'Connell? Patriot he certainly is—in the exact sense of the letters of that word—the great Pat Riot: hence the adoration of the Irish for him; for they always throw themselves, with you as with us, into the arms of the deepest-dyed democracy, because it opens the readiest way to their hearts' delight— *rows;* I beg pardon for the homely word—I would say anarchy and bloodshed. At present O'Connell and your Whigs, to use an Irish phrase, coarse but pithy, are as ‘thick as thieves.’ But let them once attach themselves intimately to him and to his *tail;* no dog that ever had a tin kettle tied to *his* tail, will drag them through dirtier ways than he will. People will say, perhaps, ‘Oh the animal *may* choose clean paths;’ but we, who know the cur's habits and nature, will say, ‘No!’”—As I did not care to discuss English affairs with one who probably could not form so just an opinion of them as of those of his own country, I asked him how it was that Irishmen, who must form but a fraction of the great American family, could exercise so potent an influence on its affairs. He answered, “Because as a nation they are destitute of all principle. They lower the moral character of every community they enter. Among us, they are brought up in bands, at election times, by our democratic leaders. These 108 *know* that thousands of their Irish voters, without whose weight the scale could never turn in their favour, have perjured themselves: they know that multitudes of them have not yet scraped off the dirt of the ship that brought them hither; yet upon their swearing to their qualification to citizenship by residence, they will deal out to them, clear of fees, false certificates in heaps; thinking, (those of our democrats who have any conscience at all,) that the good end justifies any means. Yet, further, as if we had not enough of bitter politics to vex our spirits, they bring into the bosom of our country all their own feuds and distinctions. They mount party emblems too, their colours, yellow and green—we, also, have Irish loyalists and croppies, orangemen and ribbonmen, whose feuds burst out,

not seldom, into public disturbances. The stiff-necked Egyptians were smitten with many sore inflictions, but the worst of all was spared them, the plague of Irishmen. In general society, the most turbulent, intriguing, overbearing part of our population, is Irish, or of Irish descent."—I here remarked, that at that rate, if many thought as he did, the "West Britons" could not be too well looked on in America. For the present, waving my question, he said, "They are a race apart. From what I have heard of their habits in Britain, and what I know of them with us, I should say, they do not mix readily with our other races: not that there is a want of affinity in the Irish for foreigners; but because many of their ways excite repulsion. Every Hibernian, however ignorant, however 109 poor, is, by nature, a *man of pleasure* . Other rustics are brought to participate in the vices of luxurious communities by degrees; an Irishman slides into them at once—he seems to be 'as if to the manner born.' Admit him into your house, he first *blarnifies* and then cheats you; seduces your wife, or steals your daughter. This comes possibly, in part, from want of culture, for I reckon the worst species of Catholicism in which he has been brought up, can go but a short way in a moral direction. As to your question about their standing with us, my answer shall be compendious, but exact. In our country, an Englishman is considered to be an honest man till he prove himself a rogue; an Irishman is set down for a rogue till he prove himself an honest man. Nobody here owns to Irish descent, if he can possibly avoid it; and many will drop the prefixes of their names (O's and Macs, and the like,) or otherwise slightly change them, to hide what they do not care should be known. Sometimes, when I express what I think of the Irish as a nation, people try to invalidate all I advance by the stupid aphorism (supposed by many to be a concentration of the very essence of wisdom) that 'there are good and bad in all countries;'to which I answer,'Of course there are: but that is not the question; where do you find the good so few and the bad so many, as among them?' In short the Irish are, in a peculiar sense, 'a peculiar people.' Their numbers at home have not swelled, by slow increase, like those of civilised countries. Had they had the morals or the industry, or even the *wants* of ordinary civilization, 110 they could not have gone on multiplying at the rate they have done. In less than a century the population in Ireland has

more than quadrupled, and that too in the midst of sloth and privation. They are, evidently, a spurious race grown out of potatoes!”

It was now pretty plain to me that my American friend was afflicted with a rabid Hibernophobia.

Just at this moment, three good-natured souls hastened severally to inform me that we had nearly arrived at that part of the Highlands where Anthony Van Corlear the trumpeter's great Nose becomes apparent. I missed it, however, as before: but blessed this seasonable interruption, as giving me a fair opportunity to escape hearing more libels on “the finest pizzantry in the world.”

I listened to a good deal of conversation among the different groups scattered about the decks, on American affairs—especially about the removal of the bank deposits by General Jackson. One anti-Jacksonite said, the greatest tyrant of Europe—poor enslaved Europe!—would never have dared to go such lengths in despotism as the President had done. In this he was earnestly opposed by several; and one man in particular railed most intemperately against the “great monster,”—meaning the United States Bank—and its director, Nicholas Biddle, whom he represented as a kind of devil incarnate; it appearing plainly, if he spoke sooth, that the younger Nick is quite as bad as ever was Old Nick. Things growing warm among them, I set myself to divert their attention 111 from small things to great; and complimented them as a stranger, on the great things the American people had done, were doing, and yet might do. I said that empire had first arisen, like the sun, in the east, but had been for ages back progressing to the west, and might yet set there. Here one individual, a genuine Yankee, stopped me with an observation, not very pertinent, but most laudatory of the Bostonians and the battle of Bunker's-hill! I set my interrupter right, and proceeded. The “immense” Napoleon, as La Fayette called him, has predicted that ultimately all Europe, the present directress of the Old World, will one day become *Cosaque;* but as every eagle, like every dog, can only have its day, Russian domination would be too hateful to last long. It would find a mightyrival in the great bird

of the west; which, though with talons not half grown, even now hovers, with a daily expanding wing, over the whole continent of the New World and all its Isles. The time shall surely come, when it will make every feather of the Muscovite two-headed vulture shiver with fear. In plainer words, I said, if Bonaparte's prediction be realised, the Americans and Russians will alone have to struggle together for the mastery of the globe; for all the older governments of Europe, ours included (I owned), were nodding to their fall. This was a rather daring ascent into the cloudy regions of hyperbole; but no one (I mean of those who had not altogether lost sight of me) thought it was at all too high a flight; for the imaginings of the Americans as to what their wonderful country will one day become, 112 are most extravagant. Having thus descended in safety from my altitude, and seeing that my complimentary bombast was so well received, I put them in mind that, when only thirteen ill-peopled States, they had secured their independence; that now with territory much more than doubled, and a population increased fivefold, all within half a century too, I asked what limits could any merely human power set to the career of such a people? The greatest nations of the Old World think it no degradation to yield to all your demands. One day France cedes you Louisiana; at another pours its treasures into your lap by way of "indemnity." Spain, once the sole possessor of the Indies, at the first pointing of the pistol to her throat, yields to you the two Floridas; and as to the transatlantic possessions of too-colonising England, they are like ripening fruit, almost ready to drop at your feet. The greatest island of the west, Cuba, offers itself to you; and now that the old English lion's claws are grown so dull, you can take Jamaica and the others (so convenient for you), whenever you please. Then there is Canada—"But we won't have that," said they; "we don't wish to tie *that* leaden sinker about our necks." And in fact this sentiment, however oddly expressed, I found to be little short of universal. I speak not of this occasion, when it was asserted to me by every one present, the Irish-detesting loyalist included; but on all others when the subject came up, which was pretty often in my hearing—for even then it had been much discussed, the Canadian orators and journalists having blown long 113 blasts on the trumpet of sedition. Had the Canadians succeeded in the Papineau revolt—the worst thing that could have befallen them—they would soon have been glad

to fly from the misrule of their cowardly prating anarchists—those “avocats criards,” as Murat called the noisy democrats of the Council of Five Hundred—and been fain to sue humbly at “Uncle Sam's” gate for admission. Now, never did St. Peter keep a luckless sinner longer at “the back door of purgatory”—to use the words of Sterne—than would that knowing and prosperous gentleman keep the *habitans* suing outside his threshold. In the first place, he has a dogged John Bullish dislike of every thing French: they are our genuine descendants, and true to our and their blood, in *that* . Not even the Bailiff in Goldsmith's “Goodnatured Man” had a greater instinctive antipathy to those he called “the parly-vows,” than have the majority of the American people to Frenchmen. I could see this break out, in a thousand ways, on occasion of the excitement produced by the delays of the French Chamber in the affair of the Indemnity. All parties would have forgotten their feuds in an instant to have had a “turn-up” with France, notwithstanding the aid granted them by that nation in the revolutionary war; they look to the motive of that timely succour —hatred to England, not love for them—and allow them small credit therefor: no doubt they are right. But a better reason for not caring to have much to do with the Canadians, is a wellfounded contempt of their ignorance, superstition, I 114 and sloth. A country like Canada, not naturally rich, and in such hands, really presents no field of enterprise for the men of the United States. The differences of cultivation, &c. between the two frontiers, are marked to a degree that, I understand, it is difficult for those who have not seen it even to imagine. A Scotch gentleman, long resident in America, and now an eminent publisher in Philadelphia, told me, that in his travels through the Canadas on business—and they were extensive—he never needed, at any point of the boundary lines, to be told where he got into and where he left Canada: the fact was written too plainly on every house, on every field, on every fence. United States land, at no great distance, sometimes sells for ten times the price of that within the Canadian line.

We read, indeed, in some of the disrespectable sort of American papers, that“vast numbers of our citizens have joined the patriots.” I take it, that most of these “citizens” are of a kind that the cities can well spare: if they have really left their country, it will have been

“for their country's good.” In America, as every where else, there is no lack of vagabonds —fellows “ripe for anything”—the black sheep of different flocks—the refuse of respectable families. Any *row* , within a reasonable distance (in my time it was the Texas rebellion) will serve as a kind of seton to draw off much peccant humour from the body politic. It is all for liberty and glory—also a little for pay and plunder—with these patriotic gentry. Spain has been lately useful to us in this way. True, they have not done much as yet for 115 the throne or babyhouse of the legitimately-illegitimate Spanish *bambinella;* but several of them have the Carlists disposed of abroad; and many of our crossings are the cleaner for those we have now at home.

No; the sympathy of the respectable part of the American community for the Canadians and their pretended grievances must have been small indeed. ‘Robert Shallow esquire saith he hath great wrongs.’ The real root of that contested matter seems to me to be simply this—if my poor notion, gathered from a careful perusal of public documents, be good for any thing—my firm opinion then is, that he who filled our official saddle there, knew not the vicious qualities of the animal which he had been set to mount. The instinct of your mule will ever inform him when he has got an infirm rider on his back. The stupid, yet malicious brute, first stumbles and plays antics—then, his courage increasing with impunity, he comes frequently to a stand-still, and ultimately he ventures to throw his rider; who will be but too happy if he receive not a parting kick in the face from the off-scampering animal. In the recent case, however, the creature has not been allowed to run far, and the sound lashing he lately received will teach him the difference between ill-judging forbearance and impotency to punish.

Even the accidental yet most happy circumstance of Sir Francis Head's being so prominent an actor in recent scenes, will have increased the “Saxon” sympathies in American bosoms for our cause in the Canadas. His charming book, “Bubbles from I 2 116 the Brunnens of Nassau,” was the most popular work in America when I was there; and had made every reading man in the States, as it were, his personal friend.

In conclusion I should say, that the first overtures of the Canadians for a federation with Uncle Sam, let them be made when they may, will be received by him much in the same way as the early proposals of the Genoese deputies to Louis XIV., when at the height of his prosperity; it was on occasion of that petty state offering “to give itself away” to France, that these memorable words were uttered by that haughty monarch:— *Messieurs, vous vous donnez à moi, et moi je vous donne au diable!* “Gentlemen, you give yourselves up to me, and I send you all to the devil!”

Having now arrived at the Albany Steam-boat Wharf on the East River, I took leave of my companionable fellow voyagers, including the anti-Irish monomaniac, who, up to the time I left him, had not bitten any one.

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LETTER IX. TRADES' UNIONS—AMERICAN POLITICS.

The great German poet Schiller, who carried his early notions about liberty almost to licentiousness, as his play of “the Robbers” testifies, has left it on record, as the sober and well-matured opinion of his riper years, that mankind, however great their love of liberty, can never be long free; because, in almost all ardent natures, the passionate love of freedom for their own actions, is allied to a restless desire of controlling the actions of others. Thus it is that government has always moved in a vicious circle; setting out in absolute despotism, it by and by is mitigated, then ameliorates into comparative freedom: to that succeeds licence, then comes anarchy, then despotism again, in one eternal round. His conclusion is, that the bulk of men do not deserve to be free.

America has been long held up by many as an exception to this,—an exception considered by some strong enough to break the rule. Be this as it may, a desire to examine personally the working of the social machine in the United States, where, to use the words of Washington in his correspondence with Jefferson, 118 “the grand experiment was being tried, what measure of liberty men could be entrusted with for their

own benefit”—this desire, not uncommon, had descended even so low as to me. I will not, however, pretend to say that this was my chief motive for going thither, but still it counted for somewhat in my mind; Up to manhood, politics was a subject I had neither had time nor inclination to think much about—the Revolution of 1830 in France made me a kind of politician. I then was, or thought myself, a passive radical; which colour of politics was, in a manner, natural to me, as I had insensibly adopted it from my father and those most intimate with him—radicalism had naturally succeeded to the republican notions of the times of his youth; for he was a “persecuted patriot” of 1794. Perhaps I may have occasion to speak of him again. Meantime, from what I saw and heard of the doings of the Trades' Unions of America on first stepping, as it were, on the threshold of the country, it was plain to me that the individuals composing them (or rather their leaders) were not unwilling here, as elsewhere, to deprive certain of their fellow-labourers of the control of their own actions—to dispossess the working man of the first and most important “liberty” to him, that of carrying his labour to the most eligible market. With regard to the worse than inutility of trades' combinations, my mind had been long made up; I had seen too much of its withering effects on individual prosperity and comfort, in the business which I had been apprenticed 119 to. I have heard it sportively said, that when you cannot obtain a desired thing yourself, the next best thing is to prevent another from getting it; and truly my brother co-operatives had worked together in such a way, by having “scales” (not well balanced) of payment for work—by rigidly enforcing one fixed rate of remuneration, no matter whether it were well or ill done, they had successfully brought things to such a dead level, that the veriest bungler, both in amount of work dealt out to him, and in its price, could insist on an equality with the accomplished workman. Thus did the round balls of dung, floating cheek-by-jowl with the fruit in the inundated farmyard of the fable, say, “How we apples swim!” And the masters dared not interfere. It wanted not that black affair of the cotton-spinning factory-men of the north-who so nearly spun a halter for themselves the other day—to convince me of the pernicious effects of the combination system to the industrious and pains-taking mechanics themselves. But I had had no information that it extended to America; I had always thought it the creature of the ignorance and

abuses of older societies. I was therefore not a little astonished to hear of the perfect organization of Trades' Unions there; the great general periodical meetings, the continual private conclaves of delegates, the deputations from town to town crossing and re-crossing each other at all the populous points of the Union—the journals, the pamphlets, the manifestoes, &c. This unquiet state of things, accompanied with disturbances that had taken place in 120 different towns, was not a little staggering to me, who had heard so much of the prosperity, the happiness, and above all the tranquillity of America.

A few days before my arrival, a dreadful riot had taken place at Baltimore, somewhat similar to that of Bristol in 1832. The pretext was, one of the savingsbanks having stopped payment. I say the pretext, although the failure was an infamous business, because the devastations that ensued were, as usual, committed by the from hand-to-mouth part of the community, scarce one of whom could have lost a cent by it. But then the mob are great sticklers for abstract rights—upon this occasion, the authorities of the city (so called, perhaps, from having no authority at such crises), seemed to have a great respect for popular rights also, and they were much blamed by many for looking on, and allowing the rioters to follow their own “sweet will.” The truth is, they dared not interfere; they were too weak to do so with effect: an evil this, the result of too “cheap government,”—a subject which I shall have some occasion to enlarge on hereafter. Meantime, my present business is with the American Trades' Unions.

Scarce had I returned to New York, when, on making further anxious inquiries as to what was going on among the unionists, a pamphlet was shown me, entitled “Constitution of the Trades' Union of the City and County of Philadelphia, with the By-laws and Names of Trades: Instituted March 1834.” This production opened with the following preamble:—

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“When we consider that all men are endowed by the Ruler of the universe with the same natural rights, and are fitted to enjoy the same privileges, and the same blessings;—when we know also that these are guaranteed to us by our constitution, and by the glorious

declaration which our fathers made when they wrested from their oppressors, at the sacrifice of life and fortune, their invaluable birth-rights, civil and religious independence; and when we see those rights daily invaded, and feel that they are rapidly withering in the unrelenting grasp of usurping power; and knowing also that as the past has lived for us, so we must live for the future; it becomes our sacred and imperious duty to come boldly forward to the rescue, and, at every peril, and *by every means* , to cherish and protect those immunities, which belong not only to ourselves but to succeeding generations."

The subject matter of the work thus ambitiously commenced, was the framework of a "constitution," a kind of "latest edition improved" upon the best European ones. As a recent trial has lately made such details familiar to the public, I need not enter into them farther. In a few months after—namely, in the winter of 1835–6—the "strikes" became so numerous, and the system of intimidation so alarming, that the master tradesmen began to call out for protection to themselves and the peaceably-disposed union-shunning portion of the workmen. The government did not know how to deal with a contingency unprovided for in the "Constitution." To propose a new law on the subject it did not dare. On a direct appeal, however, of the merchant tailors of New York against the tyrannical conduct of 122 their workmen (the best paid operatives in America) the tribunals took up the case, and a public trial ensued. All the while it was going on, the courts were surrounded by an overawing mob, whose turbulence nearly broke out, on more occasions than one, into something like open rebellion. It ended in the ringleaders being sentenced to a few *days'* imprisonment, and an insignificant fine. The authorities did not venture, for the present, to go any farther; and thus did "the majesty of the people" not receive a deadly wound, but a slight scratch merely. Still was the precedent thus set invaluable to the cause of common sense and good order. Meantime "the victims" had their fines eagerly paid for them, and were hailed as a kind of martyrs.

The cases which served the American lawyers for a guide, were those furnished by the practice of The English Courts . To the mother country they owed, both the evil (so they said) and its antidote. Perhaps a more equitable system to have referred to, would have

been that of the Code Napoleon, which deals out more even-handed justice than our laws: for that punishes conspirators—masters as well as combining workmen. We heard the other day from the bench, in the north, “the law of our country allows masters to combine against workmen, and workmen against masters.” The law of France says neither party may do any such thing. As “the self-same rope at several ends they twist,” the offenders of both classes are treated as enemies of the public repose and interests. *Ecce signum.*

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Article 414 *of the French Penal Code.*

“Every combination among those who employ workmen, tending to force unjustly, unreasonably (*abusivement*), the lowering of salaries, followed by an attempt at or a commencement of execution, Shall be punished by an imprisonment of from six days to one month, and by a fine of from 200 francs (8 *l.*) to 30,000 francs (1200 *l.*)

Art. 415. “All combinations on the part of the workmen to cause a simultaneous cessation of labour, or preventing labour in a workshop, or hindrance thrown in the way of workmen entering or remaining therein before or after certain hours, and in general any thing done to suspend, hinder, or augment the price of the work there done, if there be an attempt at, or a commencement of execution, shall be punished by imprisonment, for at least one and not exceeding three months. The ringleaders (*moteurs*) in such proceedings, to be imprisoned for not less than two, and not more than five years.

Art. 416. “The workmen who shall have levied fines, or issued prohibitions, or menaced punishments of any kind, or under any pretexts whatever, either against owners or managers of workshops, will incur the same penalties hereinbefore recited, having regard to the same distinctions in the degrees of culpability.”

Official Commentary on Article 414. “It is to be remarked, that the term of imprisonment for the masters is shorter than for the workmen. This difference is not made by the law by way of partiality for the former; but is a reasonable distinction; for a too prolonged absence of

the head of an establishment would be, not a punishing of him alone, but of those, in the first place, whose work he has undertaken to execute, and afterwards of his workmen. To balance this, however, the law has inflicted on him a pecuniary mulct, proportionate to the nature of his offence."

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Independently of Trades' Unions, other elements of convulsion might be seen fermenting in the bosom of American society. In no country, perhaps, of the world is the hatred of those who have every thing to get, so envenomed against those who have something to lose. For a while I distrusted the accounts I heard and read of this, as so many party misstatements or exaggerations. I at last got convinced, from what I discerned myself, on all sides, that they were but too true: but I shall quote authorities; and the first shall be an extract from an article in the "United States Gazette," a paper of considerable authority, and not remarkable for violent partizanship either way. It will give an idea of "the perfect contentment and happiness" supposed by many here to prevail in the "favoured land over the way." The writer of it is commenting on an inflammatory handbill, circulated widely among the "productive classes," directing them to rise in revolt against the oppressions of their tyrants, the "non-productives."

"There is an attempt—a secret, silent, artful attempt now in progress in this country, to undermine and destroy public confidence and security—to impair, if not to counteract, the powers of government and law—to make every man, legislator, judge and juror for himself—and in one word, to reduce our free and happy community to a state of anarchy and insubordination—such as would make the worst despotism a most desirable relief. Many persons are now busy here in the circulation of handbills—in the getting up of associations and combinations of various kinds—and in leading the minds of the discontented, and ambitious, and envious, among us, to think that they are oppressed; that wealth, though acquired by years o 125 honest industry, is not the rightful possession of him who has it, but ought to be divided, and that prices of labour ought to be regulated, not according

to the ordinary principles of political economy, but with reference to mere physical or numerical strength."

Hereupon the writer, in affecting terms, invited the good and wise in the land to come forward and bring the minds of the working men to a sense of their true interests, by some cheap publications, "level to their capacity," and finished by calling on the government to grant money to defray the expense on such a pressing occasion. The government did no such thing. On the contrary, many of the government supporters, being pretended red-hot patriots, and having their own purposes to serve, winked at all sorts of disorders which they ought to have discountenanced. No sacrifice, either of character or principle, could be too great, when "liberty" was to be advanced. In other words, certain ambitious men would remain mob favourites at whatever risk. In America, as with us,—to use the words of Milton,—noisy democrats

—"Bawl for freedom in their senseless mood, And still revolt when truth would set them free: Licence they mean when they call Liberty!"

For a long time the appeal to "the good and wise" remained unanswered, till a lawyer of Philadelphia, of no mean talent (Mr. Williams), took up the matter in the "North American Quarterly Review," in an article entitled, "Political Symptoms and Popular Rights." But it was a call, not to sinners to turn from the errors of their ways, but rather to those "who needed no repentance." Besides appearing in a work of too 126 high pretension and price, the reasoning, although excellent, and based on indisputable facts, was too much in the forms of the schools, and therefore not likely to be even read, much less appreciated, by those most in want of being set right by it. General readers are almost as much repelled by classical quotations as their ancestors were frightened by conjuration. Mr. W. ought to have avoided them on this occasion.

The following are some of its best passages:—

“Each age reproduces the absurdities of its predecessors. Men go to the school of experience, (the only school, says Burke, at which they will learn any thing,) but their wisdom drops with them into the grave, and their sons never think of searching for it there. . . The moment that labour is looked upon as an unnatural condition, that moment its advantages are desired without its inconveniences. An envious glance is cast towards those who have inherited or acquired its rewards. We sincerely believe that during the reign of open violence, when every man was an Ishmael in the wilderness, the human mind was scarcely more pregnant with apprehension than it is at present. It is impossible not to see, in the recent fermentation of American society, something more remote and deeper seated than the operation of mere physical causes. The progress of power, the profligacy of party, the rude licence of pen and tongue before which nothing has remained sacred, and the diligent appeals to caste, (that odious old cry of poor against rich, which demagogues have ever found so potent a destroyer of happiness,) are producing certain effects. Studied or not, there has been in our recent history a successful array of passion against experience, a powerful and overwhelming combination of exciting influences against national 127 repose and individual contentment. Our paper laws will be scattered to the winds, if men find, as they have lately seemed to imagine, that they may be violated at the dictates of caprice or convenience. Midnight alarms, dwellings rifled, and citizens driven into exile or gibbeted in the market place, are wretched yet obvious results of this corruption and degradation of opinion; of an upstart and bastard authority which ventures to sit in judgment on the laws themselves, and dares to usurp functions and defy forms which lie at the very foundation of individual security, and the tranquillity of the republic. It is the Jacobinism of the press and the rostrum, carried out into practice. No society can live in a perpetual fever. Function is smothered in surmise by incessant agitation, and the public mind fretted into delirium by appeals from legislation and decision to extraordinary and revolutionary remedies. The laws which ought to recognise no power between their functionaries and their objects, are paralysed by the din and turmoil with which they are surrounded; and they are subverted, or at least turned aside, by the intervention of illegitimate influences. Public men legislate and live in America in the arena, where they

are exposed not merely to the swords of their fellow gladiators, but to the fang and the claw of more obscure antagonists. *Nigro bellua nil negat magistro* . The pack fastens at the signal of the huntsman. Fame goes for nothing, honour for nothing, the sufferings and services of a long life for nothing. An exalted intellect is too high by the head. Are not all men equal? Why not bring it, in the slang of coparcenary, into *hotchpot?* It is aristocratical to know too much, as it is to have too much. This is the new-old ostracism of greatness and virtue—the same which banished Aristides and poisoned Socrates. With us it may not kill, but it may make life not worth the keeping. Martyrdom has always had its charms. It is a great ennobler. 128 But that war upon reputation which cuts it away by piecemeal, and fights with the file instead of the sword, leaves its adversary nothing with which to combat while he is on the stage—nothing to look for when he quits it. We deprecate in every view the spirit of unfairness, of misrepresentation, of low imputation, which pervades our American politics. The limits between truth and falsehood are utterly confounded and obliterated by it. It respects no standard of judgment; it yields to no weight of evidence; it stops at no aggravation of injustice. It is terrorism aided by the press instead of the guillotine, accompanied by political proscription and followed by the extremes of distrust or adulation. The next and sure consequence, if the mischief is not abated, will be practical terrorism. Flash and Squib have already begun to write letters, intimating that houses may be burned and that legislators are mortal. *Sejanus ducitur unco;* the idol of a year ago has already had the rope around the neck of his straw representative—Cæsar and Brutus have become apt parallels." [An allusion this more especially to the case of Mr. Jesse Burdon, whom I saw hanged and burnt in effigy *twice* (that was too bad!) in front of the State House of Philadelphia. He was an opulent and eloquent citizen, and had been popular, but offended "the majesty of the American people" by one unlucky vote. When I came away he was on the point of taking refuge in England.] "Shall we be told that all this is all mere harmless effervescence—the work of a few of those unquiet spirits whose passion has in every age and state outrun their judgment? We are sorry to believe that the evil is more diffused and more alarming. It lies in a disposition to bring every act and every character to the immediate test of popular judgment; in a repeal of the

representative system;—legislation by a show of hands in the Agora, or the tribunitial *veto* on the Mons Sacer. Our legislators are fast descending into clerks with their *amen* written down for them. 129 Pledges beforehand and instructions after, will soon leave them the choice of parrots between the favourite phrase of a present or a recent master—a glorious alternative between *nunc* and *nuper* . Senatorial service is becoming coeval with that of the bodies it represents. The majority shifts with the weathercock, and six years dwindle into one. Fortune plays her game with the conscript fathers of the republic, adroitly juggling them in and out with a shake of her wings;

“Ludum insolentem ludere pertinax, Transmutat incertos honores, Nunc mihi, nunc alii benigna.”

What is the object of a deposit of power if it is to be thus instantly resumed? Why is the grave farce of election periodically acted to be made of none avail? Is it not apparent to the dimmest vision that there can be neither stability nor strength where the plain provisions of the fundamental law are thus evaded for selfish and temporary purposes? If the people so please let them abrogate their constitution, and boldly and manfully make another with all manner of provisions for popular protection. If any branch of the government is too strong or too long-lived, they have a mode of shearing its looks, and of curtailing its existence. But this sapping and mining, these side winds which blow in gusts and flaws, this continual dropping which, by little and little, wears away the corner-stone of their edifice, are all mischievous and miserable alternatives. Plain men are mystified by jargon until they lose all confidence in the catechism of their political rights. They are taught to believe that they are cheated by every exercise of function which does not emanate from their own express and immediate dictation. Like honest Nick Bottom, they must play all the parts. So be it, if so it must be. But let us have no more pretence about the matter. Let the people know honestly and fairly what they are to do. Their constitution is half a century old. The French had K 130 half a dozen in one-tenth of that period, running through every variety of pyramid and column, with checks, counter-checks, and balances; classes, colleges, synods, and senates, fresh minted for each new holiday. If Americans are for similar

experiments, like good republicans, we go with them—nay, we will put in at the grand receiving-shop with our model, founded on no silly practical compromise, like our once glorious, now (always under favour of the conditional *if*) obsolete old charter, but redolent of abstract rights and beautiful theories of the social compact or of some antediluvian era. Yet are we, after all, for the established order of things, because *it is order* . Possibly a change may make it better; probably it will make it worse. We are for the constitution of 1787, without the commentary of 1798, or any other gloss or scholium whensoever concocted, save, it may be, that contemporary one, which as it preceded the refinements and inventions of modern party, and as its authors were subsequently sundered by political division, claims, as it has received, uniform respect. We are for a president for four years, a senate for six years, a house of representatives for two years, a judiciary *dum bene se gesserit* , if for no better reason, at least for this, that so runs the compact under which most of us have been born. Once enter on this career (is it not already entered on?) and where are we to stop? Threaten the timid, instruct the scrupulous, defame the bold, and legislators here at home will become in time as very machines as the members of the national assembly surrounded by six thousand dictators in their hall at Versailles. We cast no imputation upon those who carry their notions of constituent rights to this extreme, but we beg them to reflect upon the tendency of their doctrines, and to ask themselves in what principle they differ from the advocates of a simple demoracy. Much as we may defer to their opinions, we cannot espouse them. They are too radical 131 for the institutions under which we live. Man's innate love and power eats silently like a mildew into the paper bulwarks which in a moment of magnanimity or prostration he may have set up against it. The self-imposed restraint to which he submits, resembles that of stage-captives—the chains are fastened on with straps. We are by nature revolutionary; first (for when history discovered our species it was in subjection at least, if not in slavery) towards freedom; then back again towards its opposite. The former tendency is the result of instinct, of hope, and of moral knowledge; the latter of despondency—we had almost said, of despair. It is a vibration between the aspirations and the experience of humanity. The problem is, as indeed it is in most other cases, political or moral, to rest at the middle

point—the point of safety and repose. Past ages have carried the pendulum so far to the side of experience that we may well fear the wide sweep of its return toward the region of hope and trial. If it does not swing too far, it may rise too rapidly. To what extent we can trust ourselves beyond the gravitating point is not now the question. We seem to have no suspicion that we can become giddy under any circumstances, but may we not go too fast? “In all free nations,” said the Drapier, more than a hundred years ago, “I take the definition of law to be, “the will of the majority of those who have the property in land.” That maxim was superseded by the Draconic code of the French revolution, for even in America nobody thought of disputing it until the events of that struggle in a few short years obliterated half the old axioms of politics. The principle, however, is repealed, (it matters not how or when,) so far as America is concerned, and on most philosophic grounds. It would be absurd, where the development of the national energies and the support of the national character owe to commerce, manufactures, and the application of mechanical 132 labour, as much as to agriculture, that the possessor of a few acres of mountain or moor—of “forty pounds a year” in corn or cabbages, should be the exclusive law-maker. Dry goods, a lap-stone, or a ship-carpenter's hammer, are as legitimate parents of the franchise as Gonzalo's “long heath of brown furze.” But we stop there, and stand on our reserved rights. If property in land is not a qualification, neither is property of any sort, nor is that mother of property and influence in a free and republic, educated intellect, to be a disqualification. We recognize no *privilege of poverty* ,—we would as soon submit to the privilege of peerage. When a war against property unites the majority of the physical and moral force of a country, it is generally a war against abuses too—it is revolution. Such it was in France, and we are not prepared to say that in the outset, while motives were pure, many an honest patriot might not well have contemplated a division of property as an inevitable precursor of reform. It was indeed a wretched alternative most wretchedly settled. But here a war against property would be what a great statesman calls “Jacobinism by establishment;” a mere strife for gain without even excuse of pretended virtue; a mad agrarianism ending in its own suicide; a bloody and circuitous hunt after that which lies at every man's door. Yet have the inflammatory harangues and paragraphs

of some designers with purposes to answer, and some dupes with no purposes at all—mere echoes from the mountains—half excited it. When any class of society forsakes the open track, disregards the very principles under which it claims to live, and which its members, or those possessing common interests with them have established, and seeks for remedies which those principles cannot sanction, the safety and rights of every other class are endangered, and the compact of society broken up. A league in defence of the law is the necessary counterpart of the conspiracy against it. 133 The result, however modified, or by whatever means it may be called, is a state of war; not necessarily a war of guns and swords, (though it comes to that at last,) but a war of opinion, a war of sentiment, a war of strenuous and agitating effort, a war of bad passions and irritated feeling, a war of desire against possession; the old war, as we said at the beginning, against the security of property and the stability of those provisions by which alone property can be protected. Are there no indications of the existence or probable commencement of such a state of things here at home? What import the signals of attack upon obnoxious corporation; the threatened repeal of charters; the bold agrarian doctrines of certain societies, exultingly avowed by their practical expounders during the sack of Baltimore? The *vultus instantis tyranni* , has an eye for plunder as well as for revenge. What imports the institution of Trades' Union, and which exists but as the branch of a wide-spread combination designed to promote its own interests (for that is the plain English of the case) at the expense of those of the community? It matters not, as a political symptom, that it proceeds upon an utter fallacy which it claims in all sincerity to take for granted. Ignorance or mistake may sometimes extenuate wrong, though even those excuses are no justification for breach of law. Of so much the members of the society are not ignorant. They know that they interfere with other men's rights, and that they do so by a system of proscription, terror, and espionage. If men may combine for one illegal purpose, they may do so for another; if they may regulate the price of labour they may enact a sumptuary law; if they may dictate opinions they may interfere with practice. At present they are content to place their mark upon a refractory workman or an independent employer—to dog the steps of the one, or plant a sentry at the door of the other. Anon will appear more potent sanctions and

more effective 134 penalties. *Nous ne sommes encore qu'au premier pas* . The price of disobedience may be blood as well as money. The sooner the issue between law and licence is made up and settled, the better for all parties and on all accounts, because the sooner will men now how to provide against future contingencies, or to submit to absolute and overwhelming necessity. If we are to be exposed to the in roads of unprincipled radicalism, the earlier the orderly begin to bury their possessions and fortify their homes, the more harmless will be the struggle."

The writer evidently pointed his arrows too high; and thus they were sure to miss their mark. Having the happiness of knowing one of the leading gentlemen of the city who took a great interest in public matters, I stated my opinion as to what was wanted, and offered to write "A few short and timely Addresses to the Artisans and Labourers of the United States, by one of themselves." I told him that the Trades' Unions had, in their manifestoes, set out, as from a starting point, with the preamble of the Declaration of Independence, (afterwards copied by the French anarchists,) that all men are by nature equal, and that I much desired an opportunity to tear the false proposition to rags. He said, it had been solemnly propounded by grave authority, and that it had, in America, the weight of Holy Writ. I replied, I was not going to fly directly in the face of such a grave document; but I urged, the higher the authority of a practical fallacy, the more mischievous was it likely to be. It was the very soil, as it were, in which the baleful tree had taken root. On 135 this explanation, he said he highly approved of my plan, and advised me to proceed in it forthwith. When I had completed the "addresses," I showed my MS. to a person, the acting manager of a large establishment in Philadelphia, who knew well the character of those for whose benefit I was about to write, from having had to deal with them as a negociator on occasion of a "strike" in his line of business a twelvemonth before. He was a person of strong good sense—a real practical man—much more so than the person I first consulted. He advised me by all means to refrain; put me in mind that the Trades had lately established a journal of their own in Philadelphia, full of ignorance and virulent twaddle, and any opposition to it would be highly resented.

He told me that while the “strike” above-mentioned, and the discussions it led to were going on, he was obliged many times to pass by groups of unionists gathered together in the passages of the house of business whose interests he had firmly defended; that for months he was obliged to carry arms for protection; and, in proof, took out of his desk “a pistol which (as he said) never missed fire.” It was a large “Bowie knife,” a murderous weapon, much used in the west. In *his* hands—for he was a man of enormous strength —such a dagger must have been redoubtable indeed. Besides menaces of personal violence, from which his courageous bearing saved him, he had received several letters threatening him with hanging; but he confronted the one, and despised the other. “Most of these Union talkers 136 (said he) are either of a cowardly spirit naturally, or their courage is quenched by a distrust of the goodness of their cause. I have more than once plunged into the middle of their groups, and they always made large way for me, like a flock of timid sheep. But as for you, my friend, if *you* get into trouble with them—which you'd be sure to do—I doubt whether you have strength of arm, or firmness of nerve, to carry you through. Recollect always that we are here upon the ‘every man his own best protector’ system. We talk, indeed, of the strong arm of the law; but the hand that terminates the arm is apt to be wofully paralysed at times. Your present employment obliges you, in some sort, to mix with many of them; your daily comfort, if not your means of existence, depends on your being companionable. Never forget that you are a *foreigner* among us; and mongrel race though we be, that will be a ready handle for the adversaries to invalidate all you say. Your being, in one sense, one of themselves, will not be in your favour; on the contrary, you will be set down as an apostate from *the great cause* —perhaps as an emissary or spy. Excuse my frank roughness: but if you have a due fear of the Lord and Lynch law before your eyes, you will desist.” I *did* desist, though, I must own, very unwillingly.

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LETTER X. COURTS IN NEW YORK—DIVORCE CASE.

As I spent some time in New York, during which nothing eligible turned up for me, the time began to hang heavy on my hands. It was my frequent custom to step into the City Hall, and listen to the pleadings going on in the courts there. I well remember the case which interested me more than any other I heard there. It was a divorce affair. The husband was the injured party; and, as I understood at the time, had applied to the state legislature for a dissolution of the marriage tie; and that this had been granted, and a bill to that effect passed. But laws made by the state legislatures, or even by Congress itself, remain a dead letter, unless sanctioned by the decisions of the Supreme Courts. To the latter the wife had appealed, as I understood, on some legal grounds. Defective proof of her guilt it could not well be, as she had been detected *in flagrante delicto* with her paramour. But one or both of the parties were aliens, namely English; and the strongest part of the husband's case rested on the intercourse sworn to have taken place on board the packet ship from Liverpool, and therefore possibly out of the jurisdiction of the United States courts. 138 The evidence of the fellow passengers of the parties, and also the crew of the ship, went to prove the whole case beyond a doubt. The evidence, after the arrival of the parties on shore, where the criminal intercourse had been continued, was not so strong. The husband came to the knowledge of his wife's conduct in an odd way. He had written to her earnestly to join him in America, whither he had been sent as an agent for a mercantile house, and was settled at a town a hundred miles or more from New York. Some business delays had hitherto prevented his wife from joining him in America; he was daily expecting her arrival, and naturally anxious to hear of her safety, so that he looked into every New York paper for tidings. He knew not the name of the vessel that was to convey her; but he was aware that the New York papers always insert the names, taken from the ship's books, of every cabin passenger that arrives there. There are different reasons for this; one is, that it serves to prove the time of any one's arrival in the country, in case of his afterwards wishing to be naturalized. Not to mention too, that it is a readier way of conveying information than by letter. He was not a little delighted to see his wife's name at length in the list of the last arrived packet, and his impatience to meet and welcome her knew no bounds. Day after day passed, however, and she came not.

He, at last, after waiting a reasonable time, set out half distracted for New York. He flew to interrogate the captain, the officers, the crew; for by this time the other passengers had all gone their 139 several ways. No one would at first tell him anything. At last, remarking something mysterious in the captain's explanations, he begged, he prayed, he conjured him to say if anything, and what, were wrong. He drew from him, at last, that his lady had made herself early remarked in the voyage, which had been a long one, by the levity of her general conduct; and that it was universally believed she had been on too intimate terms with a young gentleman on board, about five years younger than herself, she being on the verge of thirty. On several occasions, too, since the ship's arrival, he was told they had been seen together in New York, and had taken their meals, if not slept together, in the same hotel. The ship's steward was now called in, and he said he could swear to having seen the parties in situations which set their guilt in the clearest point of view. The husband now hastened on shore—a mournful quest—to collect all the evidence he could as to his wife's proceedings since her arrival. But these amounted to strong probabilities only; parties applied to were either unable or unwilling to give positive testimony. It is probable that the system of publishing cabin passengers' names was unknown to the lady and her paramour: she thought probably to make her husband believe she had come by a later packet, and imagined there could be no harm to indulge, meantime, in a little *innocent* pastime, then fly to her husband's arms, and salute him with the “dutiful” kisses of impure lips. Be that as it may, during her husband's inquiries about her in New York, 140 she left it, and when he returned home, after a week's delay, he found her installed there, just as if nothing had happened to her. His first step was to eject her thence, no doubt with utter loathing, if not with contumely. He then addressed himself to the constituted authorities to do him right, who made an award in his favour accordingly; but from that reasonable decision, probably on a writ of error, the lady now appealed. In general, the different state legislatures have the power of passing bills of divorce, on sufficient cause being shewn. There is one exception, however (if not more), to this jurisdiction; it is that of the supreme court of Massachusetts, which has original and exclusive jurisdiction in all matters of divorce and alimony. I am not sure whether a similar arrangement may not obtain in the

state of New York also. Be this as it may, there could be no moral, but there was some legal, doubt of this woman's guilt. Here her advocate took his stand; and contended that if “aliens” could get that relief from American tribunals, which those of their own country (possibly for wise reasons) denied them, it would create an abuse which it would not be easy to see the end of. If it were as easy to dissolve marriages in America as to solemnise them, every packet would bring over troops of discontented or guilty couples, seeking release from relations they repented entering into. The distance presented no obstacle; for what was once a painful sea-voyage had become a pleasant summer excursion. Thus the benevolent intentions of the law, in devising an expedient 141 for the benefit of their own citizens alone, would become a convenience for profligate foreigners, whose cases had never been so much as thought of by the law-makers.

Neither on this occasion, nor on any other, did I see any thing of the gross indecorum detailed by tourists as existing in the American courts. The appearance, manners, and language of the barristers and judges were gentlemanlike in the highest degree. True, the former had not the powdered wigs of the English judges, nor the latter the ridiculous trenchercaps or ungainly dresses of the French *avocats* ; but I thought the absence of both adjuncts no loss. I have not a doubt that the lawyers number in their ranks most of the higher intellects of the *élite* of American society. The present president was a lawyer; so was the last but one, and he is even yet the foremost man of his country if not of his time —I mean John Quincy Adams. Judge Marshall, the Eldon of America, and the friend and biographer of Washington, died shortly before my arrival.

The discretionary power invested in the superior courts of this country, of nullifying the bad intentions or blunders of their legislators, must give a higher tone to the judicial mind here than elsewhere. When any case comes before them founded on a statute contrary to the Constitution, to equality, or to the common sense of mankind, they quash the proceedings at once; and this too without any further appeal. Would that such a check now

and then 142 existed with us! but that would be as bad as “reforming the reformed House of Commons.”

How they dealt with the divorce case above narrated, I had not an opportunity of learning. The proceedings of the courts are not reported, except in rare instances, as with us; neither do their journals give the impure details of evidence on trials, which are read with such *gusto* by so many individuals of either sex in England. The frail appellant's lawyer handled her rotten cause very delicately; he argued, not so much on defective evidence, as on general principles.—I have very little doubt that when the first honest blushes had left the cheeks of his client, when she began to look about for *excuses* , she found them “plentiful as blackberries;” they are never wanting on such occasions.

Perhaps, for instance, she had married far below her supposed rank and self-imagined merit—perhaps she might be accustomed to turn round upon her husband with the startling query, “How dared a person like *you* ever think of marrying such a one as *me?* ”—Her natural temper, from her cradle upwards, may have been one that could never brook “control”—her unfashionable husband might have been ten years older than she was—she being “very gay,” his habits might have been too recluse for her—he might have been too much occupied in business to have many opportunities or sufficient leisure (supposing that he had the inclination) to show her about to an admiring world. Some one, or all, or none of these 143 palliatory circumstances may have attended the relative position of the parties, and preceded her disgraceful exposure; but as none such were narrated in court, it would be rash to affirm there were, and I will not “go beyond the record.” One thing was plain: if she had not any excuses at all to plead, in extenuation of her infamous conduct, her effrontery must have equalled her wantonness, when she could hire a lawyer to defend a counter-plea to her husband's reasonable demand to be rid of her for ever.—I do not say, however, that she had *no* excuses; every sinner has some; but when Dr. Johnson heard some one fine-drawing apologies for a convicted adultress of his time, he stopped

him, saying, “I have no patience, my good Sir, with this pernicious nonsense: the woman's a—, and there's an end on't.”

The recent escapade of our mutual friend—'s wife, has brought the circumstances of that case more strongly to my recollection; not that there is a resemblance between them, in the blacker parts; at least, not that I know of. Still there may be abundant reason for a husband's having a legal release granted him from an abandoning, if not an abandoned woman. I am induced to bring the two particular instances to bear on the general question, with the view of discussing the expediency of such an alteration in the law of England relating to divorce, as would assimilate it more to the practice of other countries, and to the immutable principles of equity implanted in the breasts of all mankind, high and low.—But more upon the English laws by and by.

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As you know of my close connexion with one of the last indicated parties, *you* at least will require no apology from me for what I am about to say. I was intimate with—from his childhood, and well knew his enthusiastic, I dare not say his generous, character. Without knowing his wife so well, I had always remarked in her a great measure of sensibility—so charming in a woman, but which may, or may not, be allied to a good heart.—I always thought she had good natural instincts; but I knew, at the same time, that she had no steady principle. It was, therefore, with no small apprehension I saw—embark his hopes of happiness in such a frail vessel.

Of late, I had not seen so much of—, and knew not the precise footing on which he stood with his wife; but every one thought they lived together on the best terms. As for the lady's capability of being happy with him, or with any one else, I own I had little faith in *that* . A morbid sensitiveness of natural temperament in her had been much increased by a pernicious education. It might have been as surely predicted of her, as the shrewd old lady did of Mrs. Hemans: “That dear child, your daughter, can never be happy—*her colour comes and goes too fast.* ”—Were there, then, on *his* side, any outbreaks of

stormy inquietudes arising from the mind's “heroic confidence and its human misgivings; its agonies of hate, springing from the depths of love”—for I have been assured that his mind was shaded with a tinge of jealousy. If so, and it were not carried to an unreasonable extent, it was complimentary to her, for we never dread 145 to lose that which we do not love. Such a feeling ought to have been prudently dealt with, and not madly exasperated. An ingenuousness of conduct may have been wanting on her part.—What says Charles Lamb on this head?

“Truth explained, is to suspicion Ever still the best physician. Wounds which love had made him feel Love alone had power to heal—.”

But, from the beginning, I fear, all the love was on his side; or, if there were any on hers, it must have been light and evanescent. Thus much I can safely say of him, that he always seemed to me to deport himself to her more as a lover than a husband. She was, indeed, if I might judge, the pride of his eye, the joy of his heart; like Bathsheba to Uriah, he accounted her his sole worthy possession—“his one ewe-lamb.” No; never was mortal man more bound up in his wife than he. The very ground she trod on seemed hallowed in his sight. Without being a poet, his soul was strongly imbued with the hues of poetry; and there were few more passionate admirers of the beautiful in nature or in mind. His feelings, in such things, he always delighted to communicate to her whom his soul loved. Like Rosamond Gray's lover, “He would make her admire the scenes he admired—fancy the wild flowers he fancied—watch the clouds he was watching—and not unfrequently repeat to her the poetry which he loved, and make her love it.” In a word, I know he prided himself in the idea that he would ever be to her as “a guide, philosopher, L 146 and friend;” and that she esteemed and respected him accordingly. He has often remarked to me, after conversations with her, by which he thought she had profited—

“The pleasures he derived from opening up His own on others' lore to her apt mind.”

I remember writing to him soon after his marriage, on occasion of that event altering all his pursuits, and detaching him from his friends, so as to devote the most exclusive attention to her—“Well, as the old saying has it, you have not gained much by the exchange, even if you *have* turned your twenty-one shillings into a guinea.” Oh that the supposed golden coin should ever turn to a false counter, to pass from hand to hand, in itself worth nothing!

When a married woman quits her husband, her reasons for such a step cannot be too good. As D'Alembert wrote to Voltaire, on occasion of the latter writing some severe criticism on Corneille; “Mon ami, tu me dis, ‘j'ai raison:’ ce n'est pas assez; il faut que tu aies raison et demi.” What shall we say, then, if instead of extra-good reasons, she have only a string of idle excuses to offer? She will take advantage of a ridiculous quarrel, find in that a pretext she had long been looking out for, and leave her husband's house to go, God knows whither, without deigning to say farewell, or leaving a word of explanation. However, the day *may* come when, too late, remorseful sentiments, such as are expressed in the poem above cited, by Charles Lamb, may come into her mind—

“A vain unthinking creature, I Deem'd lightly of that sacred tie, Gave to the treacherous world my heart, And play'd the foolish wanton's part.”

Nevertheless, I do not wish to stigmatise too harshly the conduct of this rash and ill-advised woman. She has been the victim of a vicious education. No parent had she, capable of impressing on her opening mind the wholesome truth—more precious than rubies—“Virtue alone is happiness below.” Her natural bias for dissipation, instead of being checked by prudent restraint, was inflamed by every encouragement; and so alive was her craving for admiration, that, in after years, it became as insatiate as the thirst of the horse-leech for blood, crying ever—“Give, give!”

The portion of female education which most influences female life and conduct, is that which is received at home. If the parental house, then, be “divided against itself,”if all the

members of the family be in a permanent conspiracy against its head—if a continued system of deception and trickery be established there, not uncountenanced by motherly example, and discountenanced by no matronly precept—then are the younger members of that house on the readiest road to degradation and ruin. In whatever harm that may follow, the parent has much to answer for. And when any of the daughters, bred up in such a circle of make believe, get married, the odds are, that the dupery they have been used to at home will cling to them in their intercourse with their L 2 148 husbands: and small, indeed, is the hope of happiness or comfort for the man who finds he cannot put confidence in his wife. Thus do the vices of families continue “even to the third and fourth generations.”—“O femme, femme! créature faible et decevante. Nul animal créé ne manque à son instinct; le tien est-il donc à tromper?”—(Beaumarchais' *Figaro.*)

Captain Marryat has said, that no man can have any security in a woman destitute of religion. But the party in question was *fanatically irreligious* —a bitter hater and contemner of the Christian revelation, whose doctrines indeed had never been properly laid before her, and whose evidences she would never give herself the trouble to examine. Educated principally in a popish seminary, her early girlhood had been dosed with Romanism. This she soon renounced; whether that were exchanged for a better state of mind by an assiduous perusal of the productions of the Onanites or Owenites (Gallicè *précautionnaires* ,) I rather doubt; but she had deeply studied the “new views of society” contained in the “Natural Physiology” of the younger parallelogramist. She was also a great envier of the fame and fortunes of the notorious Ninon de l'Enclos, a lady who was so much “her own mistress.” She did not know, or forgot, that this unhappy woman, writing to her old friend D'Evremond, says, in her latter days, “do not merely say I would rather die than lead the life I have again; but, worse than that, I would rather be a dog! At the time when the unthinking 149 thought me the happiest, I have been ever the most pitiably miserable.” But enough of poor Ninon, and of her admirer too, for the present. I am now about to take up the general question already mentioned.

The English laws recognise two kinds of divorce: one an absolute release from “the matrimonial chain,” the other from bed and board. For the first, it is almost always necessary to apply to the House of Lords; the second is generally sued for in the spiritual courts. In either resort, the result of an application is very uncertain; but the expense, considerable in the latter, in the former is enormous. In such courts no suits can ever be entered *in formâ pauperis* . It is plain, then, that the laws of England take for granted that no man, if he be of inferior rank or substance, can have either honour or feeling.

When individuals of the middle or inferior ranks apply for relief to the lower tribunals, the suit is not merely repelled, it is mocked at. The industrious penny-a-line-men, who report the case, thereupon grow quite facetious, and wonder at the poor fool's ignorance of the law; yet the number of such applications do not prove men's folly or ignorance. This state of things being contrary to natural equity, it is not wonderful that sufferers are slow to believe, and, inclined to exclaim with Shylock, “Is that the law?” What! may the party quit my protection, heap wrong upon wrong, plunge me in debt and disgrace every where, and shall there be no legal means of relief from all this “Cùm nocens absolvitur, [lex] damnatur.”

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Oh yes, but there is one remedy, if you be an outraged husband: you can raise can action for damages. Damages! as if any sum of money a jury can award can lighten the concussion his whole soul may have received from the brain-blow thus cruelly dealt him. But we will suppose, for a moment, that he has the hardihood to brave the scarcely endurable exposure of a trial and newspaper-reports; and he will find some hard-mouthed barrister get up and plainly assert, or cunningly insinuate—especially if the seducer be rich—that it is a case of collusion—a base conspiracy to get money by his wife's infamy. Or if this vile charge be not followed up by the audacious member of the worshipful company of “insolens privilégiés en robe,” as Figaro calls them, then there will be charges of “want of proper care” exercised by the plaintiff over his wife's conduct; he will have been too

confiding or too distrusting; he will have taken her out too much, or kept her unreasonably confined—he will have been too much this, or too little that; no insinuation, no supposition, no assertion will be spared that can distort the case, and give an unfavourable bias to the minds of a jury. It will be proved to them, by a sharp scrutiny, that the appellant's entire conduct towards his wife was off the fine median line. Happy the husbands of women of a “gay” turn of mind, if they could but light upon it! it must be hard to discover, being narrower than the bridge with the razor-edge that leads over the abyss of the Mahometan hell, and by which the Faithful pass into their Paradise. Too confiding!

151

“Wilt thou make trust a transgression? The transgression is in the stealer.” So says our greatest poet. And thus our greatest sage—“Virtue which always needs looking after, can never be worth the trouble it gives.”

I admit, however, that there have been men who looked upon what is held to be an intolerable wrong by the majority, as a very trifling affair: La Fontaine, for instance, who says, “L'infidélité de sa femme, si l'on n'en sait rien, n'est rien; si l'on en est instruit, c'est après tout peu de chose.” Happy (or insensible) La Fontaine! Such men are, however, not common. Shakspeare knew the general sense of humanity better than that. Vide his “Othello.”

But are there not other means by which a perverse woman may destroy a husband's comfort, and make his life a burden to him, besides that one crime, so rarely susceptible of legal proof? Why, in France, even incompatibility of temper is held to be a good and sufficient cause to grant a deed of separation. Still, I am not unaware of the evils which a stern persistence in the present system removes from society;—no, every thing has its good and bad side; yet even a good rule may be carried too far. I would not plead for a general facility of obtaining a divorce; but only against its all but total impossibility. It is just to add, that the French tribunals act with great caution, in receiving appeals for separation from married parties. They must, in the first place, where want of agreement in

disposition is the plea, be unanimous in 152 their desire to part. They are both obliged to appear before the tribunals and “shew cause.” They are then carefully admonished of the irrevocable nature of the step they are about to take; they are earnestly advised to try for a reconcilement. All persuasion failing, they are obliged to come again at the expiration of a twelvemonth, during which time they must prove they have lived entirely apart; they are asked if they are still of the same mind; if they be, then, and not till then, does the process commence.

Small precautions are taken against fire and shipwreck, because every one hopes to escape them: as to precautions against a state of things where the wife of one's bosom, in one short hour, becomes a bitter enemy for life, there are none. That such things may often, and do sometimes occur, we have seen in the case of the excellent and talented S—e, who was driven insane by the conduct of his wife, as you well know, and died raving mad, within these three years, in Bedlam. Few young people who marry ever contemplate the occurrence of contingencies that *may* arise, and make a separation indispensable to their future comfort,—ignorant as both parties generally yet are of each other's nature and habits. What says the expressive couplet—

“Wedlock's a lock however strong or thick, Which villains still may find a way to pick.”

Yet does the law offer no door of escape for the generality of either sex, from such a state of intolerable humiliation.

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One great source of mischief among the less opulent of the middle classes, is the prevailing system of female education. Young women, though having little or no fortune, are nevertheless, too many of them,

“Bred to the taste of lustful appetence; To dance, to lisp, to roll the wanton eye.”

From this, as from an ever-open well-spring, flows abundance of acute misery and irregularities among women. In speaking of such an unsuitable, not to say vicious, state of things, a poet (Kennedy,) recently says—

“It is the waste of the best faculties, (Thanks to vain fashion and rank flattery) First maketh helpless, then a slave of her Man ought to find an apt and faithful comrade, And not a gazing-stock for simpering fools, All heedless of life's better purposes.”

I lately met with the following passage in a writer whose name is unknown to me, but in whose sentiments I fully agree:—“It seems odd to me, that while young ladies are sedulously taught all the accomplishments that a husband disregards, they are never taught the great one he would prize the most. They are taught to be *exhibitors* , while he wants a *companion.* He wants neither a singing animal, nor a drawing animal, nor a dancing animal: what he wants is a talking animal. But to converse profitably they are never taught; hence domestic *ennui* , and, on the part of the lady, a restless feverish love of *display* —the bane of so many 154 firesides.” Yes! Display. The author has here put his finger on the root of much mischief. For instance, people who are good at dancing, are seldom good for much else. There is J—F—(you know him), who has not spare brain enough to block up the eye of a Whitechapel needle withal; and yet I am assured, on female authority you wot of, that he is “ *such* a divine waltzer.” I have often thought I should like some one to take a goose to F—, by way of testing the common saying, and to ascertain satisfactorily whether he could say “Boh!” to it or not. Dancing men are often fribbles. The most determined quadriller I know is—the sonneteer, now laid up, poor fellow! with a bad cold, caught from the damp sheets of his small poesies, which were sent him unaired by his too careless printer. I believe it is Master Trueworth, in Sheridan Knowles's *Love Chase* , who says, “I can never see a dancing-man without thinking of a dancing-dog,” and of the merits of the whip which has brought about all his pretty motions. And Margaret, in *Much Ado about Nothing* , says to her friend, “God match me with a good dancer! but God keep him out of my sight when the dance is over.” She was a sensible

girl. The sentiment thus pithily expressed was probably strongly fixed in Shakspeare's observant mind.

Most of what are called “musical people,” also, are as unsuited for rational companions, and as in-eligible to mate with, as the dancers. And of what kind is a great part of the amateur music now, so extensively cultivated, to the dereliction of higher 155 duties? Gracious heaven! what have we not listened to in this way lately? Females *will* set themselves to sing, for instance, without natural taste, ear, or voice; and what is the result of all their efforts? Let Benedict describe it; he is speaking of those who encourage repetitions of such inflictions upon the human ear by their praises:—“An it had been a dog that should have howled thus, they would have hanged him; I'd as lief have heard the night-raven.” Music ought, with some few exceptions (the rarer the better), to be confined to those who have stimulus enough, and leisure sufficient, to study it thoroughly—namely, its professors. Its prevailing diffusion contributes little to our pleasure, and nothing at all to our happiness.

I have often reflected seriously in my innermost mind, on the present mode of bringing about the union of the sexes; and wondered whether the day would ever arrive, when women's hearts could be gained by other means than specious appearance and flattery. These are so much put in operation now, and so successfully, that the most deserving men have by no means a fair chance of obtaining the most eligible women. At present, love enters into their minds too much through their eyes. If their education were put on a better footing, they would soon see that showy and therefore (to them) attractive men may have, like the gaudy peacock of La Fontaine, “belle tête, mais de cervelle point.” The cajoleries of a fool are boundless, because they are not limited by delicate sense or self-respect. The ladies ought 156 to be put in mind, too, that personal beauty in men has often an evil influence on their character. Not to mention that the handsomest men are not the deepest thinkers—which may perhaps be no disadvantage—they not seldom become hollow-hearted selfish cox-combs. If any sensible young lady detect in herself a mighty fancy to marry a “nice young man” of this sort, after dancing and chatting agreeably with

him for a pleasant evening or two. let her read Lady Morgan, on the subject of the greatest curse that can befall a woman, the being tied to a fool for life. This will “give her pause,” if any thing will. Let us return to the ladies.

I do not confine the term “eligible” to riches or beauty merely, though neither is to be despised; still the first of these may be totally wanting, and the party be truly desirable. If the lover be of a sentimental turn, he will be content to find the woman of his choice answer to Young's description,

“Soft, modest, melancholy, female, fair.”

Should he be too anxious for mere beauty, upon the please-my-eye-if-I-should-break-my-heart system, he may find that he has got hold of a gaudy being, no doubt “excessively remarkable at times,” and very fit for holiday show, but not for every-day use; one with

“A brain of feathers and a heart of lead;”

one given up to depraved habits of self-seeking, and whose natural affections have been long withered up by early cherished pride and uncontrollable vanity. 157 The Americans would call such a partner “a help-eat, but not a help-meet.” One of their writers pointedly says, “Noted beauties are often hard to get and harder still to keep.” Let a man take such a one to his bosom, and forsaking all other things for her sake—loosening or renouncing every tie of blood or friendship to cleave to her only; yet he will quickly find that, like political economy projects, “the reciprocity is all on one side.” True, she will take an oath before heaven, to cherish and comfort him—“love, honour, and obey,” is now set aside on all hands, as being quite antiquated and *perruque* —she promises to do these while life endures. But a witty Frenchman has said that a coquette's “eternity” lasted three weeks at the most.

Some women have now-a-days such loose notions of the marriage tie, that it is really doing an injustice to others—sometimes to themselves also—to get married at all. When

the too celebrated Madame de Tencin changed her single (but not maiden) condition, some one insisted, in the hearing of the Duke de Richelieu, that Mr. de T. had “robbed the public,” and wondered what in the name of heaven such a woman could ever marry for; whereupon that ready-witted profligate said, “She has married purely from curiosity, not interest, and not even for convenience.” “How then?” said the other. “Simply because being tired of fornication, she wanted to try what adultery would do for her.” But then this happened in the horrid times of the Regency, when, as Montesquieu says, “L'homme qui 158 voulait jouir de sa femme à lui seul, était tenu pour un perturbateur de la joie publique.” Whereas, in modern France, as Bonaparte truly said at St. Helena, “les vertus domestiques sont aujourd'hui en hausse.” The French are at this time a more decent, and at least as moral a people as the English, let the latter gainsay the assertion as they may. The Americans, too, have adopted our ill-founded notions upon this point, at second-hand

The English think their system of marrying and giving in marriage the best of all possible systems; if it were proposed to exchange their mode for that of France, they would, to use the words of Burns, “shudder at the niffer.” It is so unnatural—abominable—disgusting.” Yet it has been lately advanced, and with some plausibility too, that were the names of marriageable parties of the different ranks, put indiscriminately in two urns, and drawn severally at random, so as to leave not even a shadow of choice, the amount of connubial happiness might be greater than it is at present. Without going so far, however, as this, what can an inexperienced young man, or a giddy girl, know of the world or its ways; so as to make it safe for them to have all their own way in taking an irrevocable step like this? There is also a prevailing opinion, too, about the propriety of giving way to the crude fancies of young people in choosing trades and professions, equally reasonless, although perhaps not quite so mischievous in its effects.

And let not the well-intending husband of a “gay” lady suppose that the treatment he receives 159 will be shaped by that he gives. All animal natures, except the human animal nature, are permanently attached by a system of unceasing kindness observed towards them. Many a loose-principled woman, on the contrary, has been made a kind

of saint of, for the time being, by the bad conduct of some worthless fellow of a husband. What I mean is, that conscientious men's doing all that is reasonable, or even more, by certain kinds of women, will go but a small way to secure their spouses' affections. To be convinced of this, we have only to examine the published annals of adultresses, and we may then see that in almost every instance the most flagrant offenders—beginning, suppose, with the Countess of Essex (temp. Jac. I.) and going regularly downwards—have been women who were treated by their husbands with the most pampered indulgence.

It is now time to conclude this letter, on a subject which occupies a much larger space than I had intended to devote to it. We have seen, that the practice of France and of America, with respect to divorces, differs essentially from ours; and what I have been aiming to shew is, that our law inflicts great injustice, and ought to be altered, so as to accommodate itself to the pressing wants of society. I have also expressed my opinion, that the prevailing system of female education occasions a great deal of the misery which such an alteration in our law would be wanted to alleviate, if not to remove. Had I left myself room, my intention was to finish with the story of Frederick Robinson—a profligate youth, who was tried for the murder of one Ellen Jewett, a 160 prostitute in New York. It occurred when I was in America; and made as great a sensation there, as Greenacre's affair did here. In the face of the plainest evidence, this “interesting” young villain made so sure of being acquitted, that he undertook, as soon as he should be released, to seduce the wife of a fellow-prisoner who had got tired of the nuptial tie. The husband gave him minute instructions how to set about his task, the wretch's object being to secure a divorce. But the iniquitous plan failed. I cannot enter here into the details of the case; however I may possibly find an opportunity to revert to it.

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LETTER XI. NEW YORK TO PHILADELPHIA—DESCRIPTION OF THE LATTER CITY—THE QUAKERS—PASSAGES IN THE EARLY HISTORY OF PENNSYLVANIA NOT TO BE FOUND IN ITS PUBLIC ANNALS.

After some further stay at New York—nothing suitable in the way of business having presented itself there, and as I had contracted no great liking to that city, nor had the best opinion of its salubrity as a place to settle in permanently—I began to think of visiting other American cities. I had, even before coming to the country, a strong predilection for Philadelphia, and thither I determined to go. Its easy distance from New York, not quite 100 miles, and the rapidity and regularity with which the passage to it is made, enabled me to gratify my desire without much trouble. During eight months of the year the Philadelphia steam-boats start from New York twice every morning, one at eight and another at six. There is a double set of these employed; one set on the Hudson, the other on the Delaware. Intermediate between the water conveyances is that by land locomotives on the rail-road, about sixty miles long, laid across New Jersey state to Camden, and ending at Camden. Here then are two transfers of passengers M 162 and baggage; and yet with such celerity and punctuality are things managed, that in midsummer it is possible for a merchant of one of the cities to pass to and fro in a day, and still leave an interval of nearly two hours to transact business in. The most admirable part of the whole affair is the disposal of the baggage. The porter is directed to take your baggage to the lower deck; where, on an open space, it is set down indiscriminately with the trunks, &c. of others; but no sooner is the boat under way, than half a dozen active fellows begin to stow them into small strongly-built wooden houses, equipped with what you take to be castors underneath, but which are wheels fitted to the rails of the road. They are numbered 1, 2, 3, &c., and so many of them as may be necessary are filled with the packages. It is desirable for a passenger to be present at this business, as he will then know out of which number his goods ought to come to light; for want of proper precaution in this way, I knew a Scotch emigrant, who lost all the clothes and money he brought with him from home, exceeding £100 in value, and the savings of several years. It was the beginning of a series of misfortunes, which brought on melancholy madness, and ended in his drowning himself in the Schuylkill a few weeks before I left. It is said there are often thieves on board these boats, ever ready to take advantage of the negligence of the unwary. As soon as the steam-boat arrives at the landing there, these heavy machines are rolled off the deck

to the railroad; then they are joined to 163 each other, and hooked on to the rearmost trains; when, the passengers having taken their places, the whole moves off in two or three minutes after leaving the boat.

Leaving New York behind, we dropped down the river in the direction of the sea; but soon quitting the estuary of the Hudson, we entered the sound which separates Staten Island from the continent of New Jersey. The shores of the latter are much of the same character as those of Essex below Blackwall—flat and stale, if not unprofitable. At the near corner of this sound is Amboy, otherwise Perth-Amboy; and here our salt-water voyage terminated.

The rail-road is run through as uninteresting a country as it was ever my fate to travel on; it passes, for a great portion of the way, through woods of a mean character, growing in a light sandy soil. The monotonous tenor of our way was ever and anon interrupted by arriving at water or fuel stations, which are all begirt with dram-shops; and these, so far as I could see, do a good deal of business with the passengers. Two things I saw on this road then new to me, Indian corn and buck wheat—the giant and the dwarf of “bread-stuffs,” as the Americans call edible grain; of inedible, I had already seen some patches growing on the banks of the Hudson, viz. broom-corn, whose use is indicated by its name: it furnishes the fibre of our carpet-brushes, and is almost in universal use in America for all other brooms, hair and bristles being probably dearer there. M 2

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The town of Trenton is the only considerable place near the line of the railway. It is a very neat and thriving place; also famed for the battle fought there between the Americans and English in the revolutionary war. About a quarter of a mile, or less, from the rail-road station, near the banks of the Delaware, I saw the residence of the Count de Survilliers (Joseph Bonaparte). It was a mean-looking double building, probably of brick, and stained with yellow ochre. The ground looked neglected—the count was then in England. As I viewed it, I thought of the Escurial. The difference between the two residences must have been great.

We are now embarked on the river Delaware, and paddling with the current towards the “city of brotherly love.” That *sounds* well, at any rate.—The scenery on the banks of this river is of the tamest character possible. It somewhat resembles the worst parts of the Thames; and even in that comparison the villas and ornamented grounds of the latter must be nearly all left out. The most considerable place on the line of shore is Bristol, where are some neat houses and trim gardens; there are, certainly, parts of the older place of that name that look much worse.—Upon the whole, I was not sorry when the houses began to thicken on the right bank of the river, and I was told that Philadelphia had commenced. In a short time, its one spire came into view—that over Christchurch, built in English times; I suppose it is the one which Franklin got tired waiting for the finishing of, when he sent up his electrical 165 kite. The belfry of the State-house now began to show itself; the latter, with the aforesaid steeple, are the only objects that rise above the dead level of the Philadelphia bricks; yet neither is of considerable height.

The State of Pennsylvania, of which Philadelphia is the capital, was founded in 1682, by Penn and his followers, about 2000 in number. The territory he had pitched on formed part of what was then called New Jersey; which name is now restricted to the country between the Hudson and the Delaware. The Danes had begun to colonise long before in these parts, even as early as 1624. The Swedes, also, had made some trifling settlements; but when the English took from the Dutch the province of New York, in 1664, they entered into possession of New Jersey likewise. In March, 1681, Charles II., under the influence of his brother, afterwards James II., granted, by charter, as much territory to William Penn as he could colonise, associating with him eleven others in the proprietary. The first governor appointed was Robert Barclay, well known as the great polemical champion of the Society of Friends. Before venturing to enter on his acquisition, he thought it advisable to come to terms with its rightful possessors, the Indians; whose consent he gained, in the first instance, by bargain, and whose tolerance of after encroachments was obtained by the occasional presents and constant wheedling of his successors. So fortunate were they in this prudent management, that no open hostilities broke out between the parties for full

166 seventy years. The wily Quakers soon found that much greater way might be made with savages by *sap* , than by open assault; for rum costs much less in the end than steel or gunpowder, so much put in requisition by other *civiliser* of “the Pagan salvages,” as old puritanic Mather called the unfortunate natives. Nevertheless, the *spiritual* instrument of extinction, if slower in its effects and less revolting in the application, turned out to be the more cruel operator of the two. It is fair to admit, however, that the Friends did not *traffic* in spirituous liquors to such an extent as the north-easterns did with the Indians.—Return we to “the city of brotherly love.”

Philadelphia, the second city of the union for population is perhaps the greatest in the extent of ground it covers. Its neatly-built but not lofty houses, are laid out in squares like a chess-board, the streets crossing each other at right angles; those streets which run parallel with the river, are numbered from one to thirteen, and North or South, according as they lie on either side of a broad road which divides them into two unequal parts; the older and most populous portion being that which is bounded by the Delaware. The cross streets are generally named after various species of trees, found by the settlers on clearing the land whereon the city was built—such as Chesnut-street (the most frequented), Walnut, Pine, Sassafras, &c.

When any one in London, by way of giving a notion of the proximity of his dwelling to another's 167 says, “I live but three or four streets off,” the idea he wishes to convey is very vague,—in fact, quite unmathematical. Not so in Philadelphia, when any one says, “I live so many *squares* off.” In the latter case the distance indicated is precise, even to a few feet. Now, these squares are not vacant places—as such a name would imply with us—of which *utilities* there are but two (and neither large), in the whole wide extent of Philadelphia; no, they are square masses of building, the sides of which are there called “blocks,” and most of them intersected by various alleys and courts. The houses, in most parts of the town, are substantially though plainly built; but the general result is the most wearisome uniformity imaginable. This is by no means diminished by rows of starveling trees, ranged, like so many high lamp-posts in weeds, along the sides of many of the

streets; their poor ill-used roots making desperate efforts to raise up the superincumbent load of paving-tiles, in their all but vain quest in search of a scanty nourishment. Many who hear of streets lined with trees, without seeing them, think it must be a very fine thing. The effect, nevertheless, is bad: it is so much easier to plant trees than to grow them. Besides, it gives a sombre, desolate aspect to a city. No, let us not imitate our descendants in this particular; let us continue to have “a place for every thing, and every thing in its place.”

Philadelphia is built on the delta formed by two rivers; and, in so far, resembles New York in its site. These are the Delaware and the Schuylkill. 168 But William Penn and his Quaker brothers were more shrewd and sensible than the Dutch early settlers of the latter city. They chose their location as they chose their clothes, large and roomy. Instead of commencing at the point of the fork or angle formed by the conflux of the two streams, they began building four good miles higher up, at a spot called Hackamaxon by the Indians —now the suburb of Kensington.—All have seen the print from Trumbull's painting, of Penn's treaty with the Indians. The noble tree, under which the Indian chiefs are there represented sitting (called in after-times the Treaty Tree) exists no more, having been blown down in a storm in the year 1812; a small obelisk, with an inscription, marks the spot where it stood. It was then ascertained to have been from six hundred to seven hundred years old; and was an object of so much, respect with the English and Americans, when contending for the possession of Philadelphia, that each army stationed sentinels to protect it from the axes of foragers.—Under this tree (if we may believe M. de Voltaire) was signed the only treaty not drawn up in the name of the Blessed Trinity, yet the only one whose stipulations were never broken. He is rather too liberal, however, in his praises of the Quaker policy. If they did not rob or do violence to the simple-minded aborigines, it is certain that William Penn or his associates overreached them in more ways than one. Besides the total inequality of the price paid to the value received—the commodities given amounting, in value, to “a mere song”—the 169 wily Quakers interpreted one important article of the treaty in a way as much too favourable for themselves, as it was unthought of by the Indians. For the great Penn, unlike most of his companions, having

had the advantage of a classical education, knew that a cow-skin, when cut into strips, can be made on occasion to go a great way. Something in the same manner as Dido expanded her *hide* of land at Carthage, did William stretch an Indian present of land so as to comprehend, not merely sufficient for the building a large town, but an immense extent of territory besides. He got the offer of as much ground as “the day's journey of a man.” As the Indians make no excursion in a straight line, and cannot imagine the use of long walks; as in hunting, like other animals of prey, they seldom long keep an onward course, they attached quite a different meaning to these words from what William did. He interpreted them largely, and quite in his own way. Mr. Locke calls out to all disputers, “Define your terms, gentlemen—define your terms!” But the ring-nosed Chippewas had never read that great man's works; now, probably, William had. Be this as it may, he carefully picked out the longest-winded Quaker of his train, and sent him on his way rejoicing; previously translating for his benefit the Latin caution, “Festina lente.” In spite of all obstructions, this man ascended the Delaware for nearly fifty miles, the longest day in summer being chosen for the purpose. Some native umpires were sent along with him, but he ultimately distanced them altogether. They had no 170 idea of such dogged perseverance. At last, being quite spent, he was obliged to cry, “Hold, enough.” Witnesses were summoned, and tokens left at the point which he had attained to. The Quakers afterwards had a line drawn thence to the same distance up the Schuylkill. Now as the two streams run on lines by no means parallel, but contrariwise at an angle whose limbs have an ever-increasing divergence, a glance at the map will show how many hundreds of square miles William's greedy compasses took in at one full sweep. It formed a not inconsiderable territory, including some of the most productive land, with the finest climate, in all America. And let it not surprise us, that the Quaker outwalked the natives: though superior to the whites at a short run, they have less of what is called “bottom” than many of the Europeans. It was, in some degree, a repetition of the match of the tortoise against the hare: we all know that the former reached the goal first.

Philadelphia contains few public buildings—fewer still outwardly remarkable. The State-house is a small and plain brick building, surmounted by belfrey; on the ground floor, to the left of the street entry, is the hall where the Declaration of Independence was signed, as represented in the well-known print from Trumbull's painting. It looks better there than it ought, for it is a shabby and not large room. But it will ever be famous as the cradle of American Liberty: if that were strong as Hercules in its infancy, it was not able, like his, to strangle its 171 serpents—the venomous reptiles of faction, which may one day sting it to death. At election times, the ballot boxes as they are called (for balls are not used, but cards), are fixed at the different windows of this room; and sworn receivers take candidates' names from the voters, and place them over the respective heaps; they also administer oaths, if they doubt the right of the party presenting them to a vote. In this, I was told, a great degree of partiality is often shown. At such times, the passages leading to the boxes are beset by party agents—some of them with great placards, others with printed paper lanterns on poles, which at night-fall have candles inside, to *enlighten* the public as it were. What with the noise, and bustle, and occasional rioting, the whole scene is striking. Desperate attempts are often made by the coarser democrats to keep out those known to be averse to their cause; and thus sometimes many hundred respectable individuals, of good principles but feeble in body or weak of nerve, are prevented from voting at all.

The United States Bank is said, by a popular American writer, to be the finest building in America; if it be so, any foreigner who has seen it will have a poor idea of American constructions. Here also is the Mint, rather a neat house. The Exchange is pronounced, on the same authority, to be “a beautiful building.” If it be held up as a work of art, I should call it a complete abortion. It is, nevertheless, considered by the Philadelphians as a *chef-d'ceuvre* , and was shown to me with great exultation by 172 a native, who asked me if I had ever seen any thing like it in Europe? I owned freely that I had not; I hope my short answer pleased him. The roof, in particular, painted by some barbarian, was pointed out for my especial admiration: I was told—which seems hardly credible—that it was executed

by an Italian sent over expressly for that purpose. I thought, as I looked at the coarse daubing, of the exquisite *plafond* of the Bourse at Paris, by the masterly hands of Messrs. Abel de Pujol and Meynier. The only really handsome bit of architecture in the whole place is the front of Girard's Bank, which was sent in pieces, I believe, from Europe.

Architecture, as well as all other of the Fine Arts, is in a low estate in America. Their buildings are generally well put together, so far as regards mechanicals; few people, I should imagine, are better lodged with regard to real comfort; but in any thing relating to *taste* , they are, as Porson said the Germans were in Greek, “sadly to seek.” Painting and engraving are at the same low ebb; sculpture or modelling existeth not. No sculptor would be held in higher esteem there than if he were a moderately clever stone-mason.

Here is a place for government ship-building, of no great extent, called the Navy Yard, at the lower end of the town. In it I saw the large ship, the Pennsylvania, described by Mrs. Butler in her piquant style; it has been lately launched, and is said to be the largest ship of war in the world.

The immediate environs of Philadelphia are not 173 very remarkable for beauty, with one or two exceptions. The most remarkable of these is Fairmount, on the Schuylkill; where are the forcing pumps for raising the waters of that river into a high reservoir, whence they are distributed in abundance all over the town, which is thus well furnished with that prime necessary of life. In case of fire, too, the supply is usually abundant. The grounds surrounding these water-works are prettily, if not tastefully, laid out; and the natural features of the scenery here are very fine. Lower down the Schuylkill, at a floating wooden-bridge, called Gray's Ferry, the banks of the river look rather romantic. Indeed, in many places along the course of the Schuylkill, there are more or less of picturesque snatches: in this respect far exceeding the Delaware, which is a much wider but featureless stream.

With respect to the exterior characters of the population of Philadelphia, the first thing a stranger remarks is, the number of Quakers and coloured people. The first he is prepared

for, even perhaps to a greater extent than he finds; but the latter he is at a loss to account for, as Pennsylvania is not a slave state; yet the one is the cause of the other: for the Quakers, much to their honour, are the especial protectors of the negroes. They are, indeed, friends of the weak and oppressed generally. I read many details of their kindness to the Indians. One settlement of that hunted race, who were trying to till the land for a subsistence in a remote district, their hunting grounds being taken from them, in 174 1836, met with a sad disaster, their crops having been destroyed by floods; the Friends lent them a helping hand, which probably saved them from starvation. The Quakers have also made great efforts to introduce the growth of the beet-root, so as to supersede sugar-cane cultivation; and silk-worms, so as to diminish the quantity of cotton grown; which two commodities are mostly obtained by slave labour, and together form a great cause of continuing it. They labour earnestly, besides, in the great work of Negro education, neglected or discountenanced by all others.

But while the respectable Society of Friends are doing these and other great things to merit the love and esteem of their fellow men, it is melancholy to think that their own community should be vexed with inward troubles; but such, alas! is the fact.

This erewhile peaceful society is now rent into two distinct and antipathetic parties. The name of the he resiarch who introduced these troubles, was one Hicks; and his followers, who now outnumber the orthodox or English Quakers, are called by these last, not Friends, but Hicksites; and these “friends of an ill fashion” are even increasing daily. The rival parties have each their separate great annual meetings, when each section brings together as strong a muster as possible from all quarters. They have, of course, also rival “meetings for sufferings.”

What this Hicks's exact tenets were, it would be difficult to say. I have read but one small work on the subject, sent forth by the orthodox, and made up 175 of extracts from published and unpublished discourses of his—for I am not aware of his having drawn up a detailed confession of the new faith. Judging of his opinions by that little volume, I

should most assuredly say of him and his (as worthy George Keith said frankly of the first Quaker settlers, his late brethren and coadjutors,) that “they were very little better than Deists.” In many points of doctrine and discipline, he appears to have set the authority of the Holy Scriptures altogether at nought; and in one passage he goes so far as to say, that it would have been better for man, upon the whole, if the Bible had never been written at all! He is for following the unaided suggestions of the Spirit only. The two parties are at open war, and have on more occasions than one very nearly come to blows. There have been such dire contests for the possession of the meeting-houses, graveyards, and other property (the latter not inconsiderable in value) belonging to the community; such mobbings and counter mobbings in places of general resort; such nudgings and elbowings to push one another out of contested ground; such wrenching-off and putting-on of locks on doors, and removals of gates, and making breaches in walls, and pitching of loose bricks, resulting therefrom, on one another's toes, With a pretendedly civil but rather long deferred cautionary “Get out of my way, friend, or I shall of a surety hurt thee”—such spiteful doings, in short, altogether, as are enough to make Christian eyes weep themselves blind with vexation. And the 176 worst of all is, that a people who made it their principle and their pride to shun all interference of the civil magistrate, on any occasion whatever, have appealed to the laws against one another with the bitterest recrimination. Oh, friends! what a lapse was there. When I left, one of the state legislatures (that of New Jersey) had tried to settle their disputes about the contested property, by an award on the share-and-share-alike principle; but the orthodox were quite indignant at this, although by far the fewer number, and were preparing to resist it to the utmost. “Ichabod, Ichabod! the glory hath departed from our house.”

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LETTER XII. COLOURED PEOPLE OF THE UNITED STATES.

Part of the last letter related to the Society of Friends; the present will be devoted to the objects of their especial care, our fellow-men of the Negro race, who have few others to look to for protection in America. The Quakers alone, of all the many denominations

of a religion of love and good-will to man, furnish the means of their secular or religious improvement. By all the others (I speak of them collectively, not individually) they are denied sympathy in life, and after death a grave. The Quakers, on the contrary, strive zealously to advance their interests in every way. Does an unprincipled slave-owner set up a claim to deprive a free negro of his liberty, he finds a fund set apart by the Friends to defend his cause. Is he out of employ, they find him work; is he in prison, they comfort him, and, if worthy, try to obtain his release; is he sick, they visit him. They open numerous schools for his instruction, or for that of his offspring. To do all these things, and more, in the face of the American world, requires no small degree of moral courage, as well as of active humanity.

The possible incorporation of the two races is N 178 looked upon with horror. Any white who would stoop to espouse a woman with negro blood in her veins, would find himself excluded from all respectable, not to say genteel, society; no matter how rich or how accomplished the party might be. To use the emphatic words of one of their writers, “He might, by such ready means, degrade himself for ever, but could never exalt her for a moment.”

A few weeks before my arrival in Philadelphia some excesses took place, arising from the mobbish antipathy to the men of colour, which might have been the means of setting the whole country in a flame. It appeared that a murder had been committed, by a negro servant on his master, for which he had then been arrested, and was afterwards in due time and form punished for his crime. This unlucky affair caused a deal of excitement; and the odium, which should have been in reason confined to the guilty individual, was extended, by the savage mob, to all of his colour. After insulting and cruelly beating numbers of black men in the public places of Philadelphia, and hunting them about like wild beasts every where, one large body went to the quarter of the city principally inhabited by them, pulled down some of their dwellings over the heads of the inmates, and burnt others. Many of the coloured people were so grievously maltreated, that several died. Finding matters had got to these extremities, and dreading they might get worse, a

considerable portion of the more able-bodied men of colour left the city, took up a position near it, 179 and began to arm. There they remained three days, rapidly adding to their numbers and means of resistance or offence. By this time the popular effervescence having a little subsided, the wiser heads of the city sent to treat with the fugitives, and persuaded them to return, on conditioning to obtain for them “indemnity for the past, and security for the future.” They did return; and in due course application was made to the State legislature for reparation of the damage sustained from lawless devastation; but, as had been usual on such occasions, it was denied.

Political rights they have none, in any of the free States. No personal taxes are levied on them, and they do not vote. In Pennsylvania, there is, indeed, no positive law to prevent their taking part in elections; and knowing this, I asked a Philadelphian why they did not come to the poll as others did? His answer was significant, “Just let them try!” There is a strange law in some, if not all, of the slave states, which allows a slave-holder additional votes in right of his slaves, and those increase in proportion to the number of these he may happen to own. Our “animal parliament and universal sufferings” people might take a hint from this inverted system of representation, and let every coster-monger have a vote for his donkey. It would be reasonable, and not carry reduplication of suffrage so far as the American system.

Thus much for their want of political rights. Of their deprivation of social rights I have already said N 2 180 somewhat; what remains to be said might be summed up in a few words. Nobody will travel in the same coach, no one will sit in the same church, with them; no man will learn them a trade; no one will teach a school where they are; no preacher will serve as a pastor to them; nobody will allow his dead to be buried in the same ground with theirs. In short, every circle, even the lowest, will shun the approaches of the highest of theirs.

I was a spectator once of the first-mentioned species of exclusion, one day, on the rail-road from Philadelphia to Norristown. The weather was oppressively hot; and some

coloured men and women, most respectably dressed and of civil manners, came up and asked the conductors, in a very humble tone, if they could be accommodated in any part of the train? They had been out on a country excursion, and seemed tired; but no one shewed the least inclination to receive them, although there were a good many vacant places in almost every carriage on the line. At last I got up, and said we could accommodate five or six of them in ours, and if the rest passed farther on, no doubt they might all get places. Upon which more than one of my fellow-travellers said I might give up my place if I chose, but “no niggers should come there.” I of course sat down; to argue the matter would have been of no use to the poor outcasts, and might have been harmful to me. The conductors looked on while this was passing, but did not urge the point one way or other. Still I could see they were anxious to 181 obtain *the money* of the coloured people whom they despised so much.

“Though proud as Lucifer, they're willing To vail their pride to gain a shilling.”

So we were all asked, as a favour, to get out and disperse ourselves in other carriages, and thus leave the suppliants by themselves. The poor souls were glad of any arrangement; and I could read in their eyes the thankfulness to me that their mouths did not venture to utter.

If a black man and a white man enter into discussion, as soon as the latter gets on the wrong side of the argument, the obnoxious colour of the former is always a ready retort, and, in America, held “good in law.” One night that I was in a New York oyster-cellar, I happened to be present when an instance of this occurred, which will serve as an example. The waiter—a black man, of decent exterior, and particularly civil—had been opening oysters, for some time, to a fellow in the garb of a gentleman, whom he was not able to content, try as he would. He did not “open fast enough;” he was accused of picking out the worst oysters, &c.; the tarragon vinegar was bad, the limes were spoiled, the cayenne was saw-dust, &c. The whole company were annoyed with his noisy complaints, not unmixed with imprecations at the luckless servitor. At last the man began

to remonstrate, and appeal to the gentlemen present against the unmerited abuse of this ferocious gourmand. No one answered to the appeal. The other was emboldened, by this want of sympathy, 182 to farther outrage; and, among other things, asked, “D—n your soul, you black thief! how dare you speak so to a white man?” &c. I felt the blood begin, as it were, to boil in my veins, and could contain myself no longer. Accordingly I rose up and said, “I wonder the gentleman will pay a negro the compliment to suppose that he *can* have a soul to damn.” I fully expected the observation would lead to a quarrel; but the ruffian found it convenient to take no notice of the remark: as for the others present, they met my unusual proceeding with a who-are-you kind of broad stare. I resumed my place, and so the matter dropped. This is not the only instance which I could relate of the *liberal* conduct of many of the Americans.

I have given an example of the first species of exclusion enumerated above: I shall give one of the last. I had it on *grave* authority—that of a sexton himself. He assured me the burial-ground people were in the habit of breaking into coffins brought them for interment by families whom they did not know, to satisfy themselves there were “no blackies inside.” I did not directly give an opinion on such excessive delicacy, carried so very far; but, by way of indirectly conveying my sense of its absurdity, told the friend then with me, in the sexton's hearing, the story of the old lady who was so horrified at the proposal of a neighbour to bury a child, who had just died of the small-pox, near a dead grandchild of the former, who had never had that malady! It fell a dead-bolt, however, and so might as well not have 183 been shot; neither of my hearers could make the application.

I have said no one will take coloured people's children to apprentice; of course they never learn any regular trades—unless, indeed, chimney-sweeping be reckoned one. That *aspiring* profession is, indeed, entirely in their hands. Now, a Frenchman of the rigid “classic school” would find here, well observed, two *unities* —blackness of dress, blackness of trade; for the American chimney-sweepers are all negro boys: and gay little fellows they are too; how often have I heard the streets of Philadelphia ring with their

cheering songs, even in the coldest winter mornings; for they are not like ours, *dummies* as well as *chummies!* I wish dear Charles Lamb had but known them.

Thus ignominiously expelled from the communion of mechanics, they are obliged to adopt such callings as no one else cares to follow. They become waiters, barbers, shoe-cleaners, porters, old clothesmen, secondhand furniture brokers, scowerers, cooks in ships (not sailors), &c. &c. They are, in a general sense, literally “hewers of wood and drawers of water” to their white brethren. We do not, however, find any of them sweepers of crossings there, although we have it on the authority of the hard-headed Scot, who indites a certain grievously-be-praised periodical, that there are such a marvellous number of blacks found at sweeping-stations in London. “I have often been struck, as I am sure every one who has passed through the streets of London must have 184 been—with the great number of black men who possess lucrative (!) stands, &c. How it happens that so many of the ebony personages have been so fortunate, compared with the white population of London, is one of those things which are beyond the reach of my philosophy.” Suppose I had asked a Philadelphian, “How is it that your coloured people alone eat the meat of the huge sturgeons which follow the shad up the river Delaware, and so get caught?” His answer would be short and plain: “Because, as no one else will eat it, it all falls to the share of the blacks, who can buy it at a very low price. As it would not require a great reach of “philosophy” to comprehend this; so neither would it be difficult to understand how the poor blacks who are thrown ashore, as it were, in London, upon a society which knows them not, should take to this last resource of the miserable to keep them from starving.

Whatever he may say, I do not think street-sweepers ever could realise “handsome fortunes” either there or here: and if this person find it convenient to make war on the miserably poor, let him not make selfishness still more selfish, by telling such bangers in h is “Random” way. His statistics of humbug—or rather humbug statistics, full and minute though they be—are still incomplete. The next time he sets about calculating the “nett

sums yearly realised" by those who impose upon the town in different ways; let him not forget to inform us how much *he* receives by his works.

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The coloured men like to give fine names to the places where they exercise their calling. The barbers are of course all hair-dressers and perruquiers; many of them are "from Paris," though how they got there and back, Heaven alone knows. "Shaving establishments" and "shoe-cleaning emporiums" are common. Over a cellar door of one of these "emporiums" in Sixth-street, Philadelphia, is the following couplet in painted letters:

"Gentlemen, step down and read the news, While I clean your boots or shoes."

Those of them who are employed in traffic are less greedy in their dealings than the whites,—the dealers in sale furniture for instance, as I have had occasion to experience. They seldom ask more than a third over and above what the article would cost new. Now the white salesmen of London demand a full half more, and will scarce ever abate of that *conscientious* price, whereas the black brokers of America always do.

I think the natural dispositions of the coloured race are excellent. The Americans accuse them of being lazy and sulky: if they are, I am convinced they are made so by the treatment they receive. A proof of this, in my own case, may amuse. The waiters in the different hotels and boarding houses soon found out, by my exact civility to them, that I did not consider them altogether as brutes. The consequence was, that I always got helped to every thing I wanted at table sooner than any one else could; any little dainty was anxiously pointed out and sedulously 186 brought to me. The slightest glance of any nobleman's eye was never watched with more care by obsequious servants for interest, than was mine by these kind souls, from unbought gratitude. Of their strong natural affection, I used to read many interesting examples detailed in different journals of the Friends. One paper in particular, which I brought to England with me, but have unfortunately lost, contained several instances of forgetfulness of self, which did honour

to our common nature. It is no unusual thing in the Slave states for men and women to be sent out for employment by the day or week, on condition of paying a fixed sum as the reasonable amount of their supposed earnings. When this occurs, they almost always strive to obtain more; they have then the pleasure of having something they can call their own, and which they can do what they like with. And what is the first use many of them think of applying this money to? In buying what is infinitely more precious—the PERSONAL LIBERTY of those who are dear to them. Often a man will thus buy his wife, or a wife her husband; a child the parent; the parent the child, a brother the sister, &c. In the journal above mentioned, was detailed the case (if my memory serves me right as to a name which it were a sin to forget) of one Mary Douglas, a domestic slave in some family —names and places were given—of Louisiana. She was about twenty years of age when her master, a widower, died. He had been a planter; and being a free living man, had left scarce any property except what he had in her person; but then she was 187 what the advertisements style, “a very valuable slave.” She became, by his death, the property of his only child, an infant still in arms. Him she supported entirely, for many years—indeed till he arrived at manhood—principally by going out washing. She also bought off, in that time, two near relations; then her husband (all slaves in other families); and then—but not till then—did she think of emancipating herself. On application to her young master, he had the heartless ingratitude to exact such an exorbitant price for that which he ought to have given, that she fell dangerously ill with vexation and despair. This second Inkle then prudently, if not kindly, abated of his demand! and thus the heroic woman ultimately, when long past the middle age, gained her liberty.

Thus, not only do the Friends forward the material interests of the blacks, but by setting their character in its proper and amiable point of view, they do their! utmost to enlighten the public mind in their behalf. If ever there be a hostile struggle—and it would be deadly —between the two colours, these western “bianchi e neri,” Quakers' hats will sell at a high premium in the “stores” and happy will be the head that gets covered with their broad protecting brims. I once had this riddle put to me: “What is that thing which may be

best likened to the devil asleep?" Answer, "A powder magazine." Let the American "anti-amalgamationists," who will not listen for a moment to any thing you can say in favour of the coloured people—let them beware; they verily live next door to a "sleeping devil."

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When I was in America, there were two coloured men burned alive in slow fires, by the Lynchers. One of the wretched beings who met this cruel fate was a freeman, and had had a quarrel with a white, who insulted, and I believe struck him. A scuffle ensued, in which he drew a knife, and slightly wounded his adversary. He then took to flight, but was pursued and driven for shelter into an outhouse. Thither a town constable was sent to arrest him; but he would not submit to be taken, and in the heat of passion, threatened death to any one who would make the attempt. The constable rushed upon him, and in the struggle received a wound of which he died. Others now poured in, and the black was secured, pinioned, and safely lodged in the town jail. The deed having been done in presence of so many witnesses, his just and legal punishment as a murderer was certain; but the people of the town found out that "hanging was too good for him." In about five or six days after the event, a numerous body of well dressed men, in masks, went to the prison at night-fall, and demanded the prisoner of the jailor. The latter making a show of resistance, they threatened to burn his house over his head, if he were not instantly delivered up to them. He was then tied to a large tree in a public place, and faggots piled round him sparingly, in order to prolong his tortures. This done, they were set light to, and a ring formed about him by the Lynchers, so as to shut out all hope of rescue from individuals, of his own colour. This scene continued till past midnight; when, the hapless victim deliberate 189 cruelty having long ceased to utter cries, they thought him dead, and so dispersed to their several houses. Not one of the coloured population, bond or free, had ventured to approach the fatal spot, no doubt fearing maltreatment; but some white people, either from sympathy or curiosity, having gone to examine the state of his body, said, "He *must* be dead." Whereupon the sufferer said, "Oh no, gentlemen, I am not dead; in mercy kill me—

oh! in mercy kill me; for the love of God, dear gentlemen, do kill me!" He died in the course of the night.

For several Sundays after, as the news of these events spread over the Union, the details, so disgraceful to the age we live in, were given out from the pulpits in different negro meeting-houses, and commented on by their preachers to audiences whose cheeks streamed with tears of sorrow and indignation.—The details of the other *roasting* I do not so distinctly recollect, but they both took place in the west, and they were not unsimilar.

During my stay, I saw what I considered a great curiosity, a newspaper from Liberia. This is a settlement of English and American blacks, on the coast of Africa, which is now a thriving colony, and will, no doubt, be powerfully instrumental, one day, in extending the blessings of religion and civilisation, to some considerable portion at least of the continent wherein it is situated. The composition and "making-up" of this journal did not differ much from those of most others: of course the editors, printers, and contributors, were all negro men. There were 190 editorial articles, a poet's corner, arrivals and departures, shipping lists, houses and shops to let, accounts of parties given, marriages and deaths, &c. &c. But by far the most amusing part of this newspaper was a long and plausibly-written, though too severe, critique of Mrs. Butler's book on America. The writer —editor, or whoever he were—accused her of great illiberality in her way of treating the subject; but the charge he dwelt most on was that of her "excessive vulgarity" of style and words! He made a list of some dozens of the latter, which he gave the lady the credit of manufacturing herself, and begged to be informed by the initiated "whether they were English" at all.—The imposing "we," and the tone of authority of our Reviews, were throughout carefully preserved.

During a considerable part of my stay in America, the war between the revolted United Statesmen of the Texas and the Mexicans, was going on. The great grievance of "the patriots" was the flat refusal of the Mexican authorities to allow them to buy and sell, or keep slaves. Now, to use a phrase that has been a good deal bandied about of late years,

the kind-hearted and liberty-loving Americans wanted “to do as they liked with their own.” They have, I believe, gained their point; thanks to the sympathies and assistance of their brother negro-breeders in the contiguous states and elsewhere.

I see, by late papers, that there was the other day great danger of a dissolution of the Union, on occasion of certain petitions being presented against the 191 indecency of having a market for negroes close to the Capitol at Washington, that metropolis of a free country, where, as in so many cattle stalls, they

“————gaugee and span, And traffic in the muscles and the bones of man!”

So loud and so indignant were the remonstrances of the handful of emancipationists on the occasion, that the slave-holding members of Congress withdrew from the hall in indignation, and threatened to return at once to their constituents. After all, the slave-holders are not altogether in the wrong. What right have they to give up, they will say, their most valuable property, secured to them by the federal compact, without any indemnity whatever? For the example of England, in paying for humane feeling carried into practice, does not seem to be thought of by the noisy—and I fear, in many instances, hollow—abolitionists of the north. Two years ago, when they fell out so about “surplus revenue,” why did they not emancipate the slaves with that?

“No, no, they never mentioned it; Its name (compensation) was never heard.”

All the time of my stay in America, complaints came pouring in from all quarters of the “diabolical doctrines” and “satanic attempts” of the emancipationists. The government interfered despotically, and forbade the post-office to convey any of their publications or other missives; while, in search of these, packets were broken open, and searches made, quite in the style of Bonaparte's police. A certain governor 192 of a state (Carolina, North or South) Mac-Duffie by name I think, addressed a special message to the State legislature on the subject; in which, after stigmatising the labours of the abolitionists as “incendiary in the highest degree,” he entered into a laboured defence of slavery in the

abstract; satisfactorily proving, as the tippling ordinary in *Jonathan Wild* did of punch, that “it was no where forbidden in Scripture;” and that it was the estimable source of unnumbered blessings to the happy country of America, and, through her, to the world at large. This conclusion he came to, if not in the most logical manner possible, yet by a rather pretty, and not unplausible, way of sorites. As thus: the world cannot get on without sugar; and if it could, it must have cotton. Now the comfort and prosperity of America depending on her growing cotton, and those of Europe on manufacturing it; once stop the supply of this commodity, which slave labour alone can produce (a debateable proposition, however, but no matter) and universal misery would ensue both here and there; then would come anarchy and barbarism, succeeded by loss of liberty and religion; *ergo* , freedom demands slaves. Q. (*non*) E. D. His amiable Excellency then called the attention of the legislature to the contrast presented in the comfort and *freedom* of the lower classes of America, as compared with the penury and slavishness of those of Europe, which was secured alone by slave-keeping. In his idea of European degradation, however false, he but echoed the prevailing 193 sentiment of his country. I may find an opportunity elsewhere, to take this notion of theirs to pieces. Meantime, I can assure him, from my own experience in situations the best of all adapted for giving me the means of judging, that, if he include England and France in the term Europe, he is altogether mistaken. I have seen such abject submission in American workmen, to the searching tyranny of domineering capitalists and their underlings, as involved the dereliction of all manhood, and would not have been borne by Englishmen or Frenchmen for an hour. But to give an idea of the exaggeration which passes current in the States on this head, even among their best-informed, I shall subjoin a paragraph from the “Review,” before quoted: it is given as a faithful picture of the general condition of *our* labouring classes:—

“We have heard of countries in which ‘natural rights’ seem all that existing institutions have left to the unfortunate victims of over-supply and a fluctuating market,—where manufacturing man vibrates, from his crib to his coffin, between oatmeal salted and oatmeal saltles—where political economists reckon him in the same category with a

spinning-jenny, and ministers view him only with an eye to the poor-rates or the estimates for the home service. His straw, his rags, and his porridge, are computed to ‘the tenth part of a hair.’ Such a man's right of rebellion can be contravened by no law save that of the strongest. He is an outlaw, with the *caput lupinum* , gaunt and grisly, on his shoulders. The society in which he lives has found or made him a sacrifice to the pride and ambition of its rulers; to the grasping spirit of conquest and the vain magnificence of the O 194 crown and the hierarchy. Why should he endure it through a life of slavery, like the Elæan misanthrope, feeding upon his own vitals? Penury and despair are not bound to ask questions of casuistry.”

But to return from the white slaves to the “black cattle” of the States—I have already stated that no master will take young negroes as apprentices to a regular trade; nor would any journeyman mechanic work beside them, if he did. I know but of one exception—that of a boot-maker and mender in Philadelphia, and he made me a pair of boots after a most roguish fashion. He had, no doubt, imperfectly learned the art of the physicians of *soles* in the Eastern Penitentiary, where, each culprit being confined at work in a solitary cell, there is no opportunity for the “common damned” to shun his society. I shall close this digressive letter with an instance of the acuteness of the coloured people to flaws in statutes; it goes also to show that patchwork legislation is not confined to our parliamentaries. The legislature of one of the south-western states passed a law having provisions somewhat like those of the Irish Insurrection Act; one of which was, that no man of colour was to go out after dark, except in certain specified cases of urgency; and then to be always provided with a lantern, or be liable to arrest and punishment. The order was *literally* obeyed, for each black carried a good and sufficient empty lantern! Thereupon the angry legislators passed “an act to amend an act,” &c. That too was obeyed, but with unlighted candles! Then came out a third 195 act, with a preamble commencing, “whereas, the plain intentions, &c., having been frustrated by certain wicked evasions,” &c., ordained that said candles should be lighted; and lighted they were by the obedient Ebonites. Now, plain

mother wit must have the credit of all their shrewdness; for it occurred in a state where the penalty of death is menaced at all who shall dare to instruct them in reading or writing. O 2

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LETTER XIII. AMERICAN CLIMATE; MANUFACTURES; BOOK TRADE—DRUG STORES OF PHILADELPHIA; THEATRES; FIREMEN; PUBLIC MEETINGS; STATE OF SOCIETY THERE.

I arrived in Philadelphia at the finest season of the American year. In the middle states the spring is unpleasantly moist; in summer, the heat is, for several weeks, intense, with sudden variations of temperature that will cause the thermometer to fall sometimes thirty degrees in a few hours; while, on the other hand, the winter is almost insufferably cold. That great imitator, Mathews—himself inimitable—used to speak with shuddering recollection of “the Siberian winter” he endured in America; and, I believe, imputed his last fatal illness to its effects. But the American spring is delightful. About the autumnal equinox there is usually a violent storm; and to that succeed two short months of the finest weather imaginable—a kind of second summer, superior to the first, and called there, I know not precisely why, “the Indian summer.” At its termination, it was my fate to pass, in this city, the severest winter—that of 1835–6—which had visited the country for nearly a century.

The Delaware, a fine navigable river, is about 1200 yards broad at Philadelphia; but it is frozen 197 for several months every year. This inconvenience, added to the distance (more than a hundred miles) from the sea, will prevent its ever becoming a considerable port. There are, consequently, very few foreign vessels that trade to it; and there are only four packets, of inferior equipment and accommodation too, that sail to England. Neither is it a considerable seat of any kind of manufacture; but it is of great consequence as a kind of central entrepôt for all productions, native and foreign. The manufacturing population of the United States are almost all confined to New England. In the hands of its busy and enterprising people is the entire cotton-trade, the fisheries, and distilleries. In some branches of the cotton-trade they have even become our rivals, as they weave full

200,000,000 yards of plain goods annually—an amount far exceeding the wants of their own country. Wool is manufactured to the value of £5,500,000 per annum, and paper to the amount of £1,200,000. In New England are also manufactured immense quantities of shoes and boots, straw hats (much worn by both sexes), clocks, tin-ware, &c. Our towns of Northampton and Dunstable find their counterparts in Hartford, and other places there.

To the Philadelphian wholesale warehouses, as into a great reservoir, do most of these commodities flow, and are thence distributed over the more southern and western states. This transmission of products has been much facilitated of late years by improvements in roads, &c., insomuch that the journey 198 to Pittsburgh, on the great western route, and famous for its coal and iron mines, which used to occupy a fortnight, can now be made in less than three days. Immense sums have been spent by Pennsylvania in internal improvement; and thereby that state has a heavier debt than any in the Union. It is to be observed, that when we hear of the United States having no public debt it is to be understood of the general government only, for each state has a separate debt of its own, and, in some instances, these are not very light either.

In Philadelphia there are, consequently, a prodigious number of storing warehouses; of retail “stores” there are, considering the extent of the place, very few;—in a large proportion of the streets, indeed, there are none at all. [*Nota* : haberdashers and silk mercers are called “dry goods stores.”] Among those last, “book-stores” hold a conspicuous place; for, among the branches of Philadelphian traffic, printed literature must not be forgotten. Reprints of English works—called “pirated editions” by our trade—are so abundant, that most Americans look upon books not of the current year's date as scarce worth the reading. Such works as Bulwer's or Marryat's novels may be had complete, as soon as they appear in England, and well done up in cloth, for 2 *s.* ; or in sheets, printed newspaper fashion, for about 1 *s.* 2 *d.* In England they sell at prices varying from £1: 1 *s.* to £1 10 *s.* 6 *d.* All other works of our originating bear a similar price. This state of things, so convenient for them, is too well established to be shaken. Yet 199 we heard lately of applications being made by English authors and publishers to Congress to put down

American literary piracies, or at least to secure an interest in such reprints. We may save ourselves the trouble: however civilly Congress may seem to entertain such a proposal, it dares do nothing, for the state legislatures would never allow any justice to be done in the matter. In a commercial point of view the gain to the country, by “stealing brooms ready made,” is very great. Viewed as a literary question, the result for the Americans is riot so favourable. They have as yet little literature of their own; nor, while the present system endures, can they ever have; but, no doubt, they comfort themselves with the idea that they get on very well without. Of poetry, indeed—such as it is—they have no lack. Suppose each of their 1,200 newspapers have ten taggers of lines with ragged endings, we have here 12,000 “poets,” who limp after ours “in base awkward imitation.” Still, as I have just intimated, the system is not one of clear gain; it must ever *belittle* (to use an Americanism) their general mind. They are like the bees at whose hive-doors basins full of sugar have been put, who, from being active and cleanly insects, cease to make much honey, and become besides lazy, lousy creatures. The book trade in Belgium is a yet much nearer thorn in the side of French bibliopolists; but vain will be all attempts to remove it, till a national incorporation take place. And yet Mr. Serjeant Talfourd, in bringing up his new law on copyrights, said that something 200 might be done for English literary interests, both on the Continent and in America. Propositions may indeed be made, and laws enacted; but the one will be neglected, and the other become a dead letter. A not much better fate will attend the great changes he has in store for securing perpetual copyright to authors and their descendants. If his plans were feasible, which they are not, they would produce injustice. If ever the rule that “partial ill is universal good” could be applied with safety, it would be in the looseness of our laws regarding property in published works. Nothing would be more preposterous than granting the perpetual interest he talks of investing in persons who had neither head nor hand in their creation. No, the public will not long allow itself to be at the mercy of such: such a privilege might, in many instances, amount to a prohibition of the thing protected. It would never permit the productions of human intellect to run the risk of being abolished in this way. Let authors look to their future fame, as well as to present profit; how would they like to see a race

of literary *middle men* spring up between them and the booksellers, all under contract to disfeature their best works, and present them to the public under other names? By such evasions, on a large scale, would both “empty praise and solid pudding” elude their too eager grasp.

To return to the Philadelphian “stores”—I never saw a place so abundantly supplied with druggists' shops—nor, perhaps as an inevitable consequence, any one so rich in burying-grounds. I have stood 201 in one spot, and counted eleven chemists' “stores” in sight at once, the furthest certainly not a quarter of a mile off. The Americans, young and old, certainly do swallow medicine in amazing quantities. Of a surety their “practice of physic” deserves not the stigma thrown by the medical men of this self-sufficient little island of ours on that of the Continental physicians, as being “ridiculously inert.” It is the thorough horse-drenching system, and no mistake. Can it arise from desperate efforts to prolong life by violent remedies for small ailments, that the Americans are in reality a very short-lived race—for middle-aged people are scarce among them, and aged persons very rare? Be this as it may, they certainly do carry purge-procuring, pill-gorging propensities farther even than we—indeed, as far as human flesh can bear.

We are, also, a meat-devouring race; in this, too, they go beyond us, for animal food forms no small part of their three or four meals every day. Our general cookery is in the semi-savage state: theirs is no better. We swallow great quantities of tea; the Americans do so also; and for every pound of black they use ten of green. The English despise the comforts of the bath; they cannot have a greater practical contempt for it than the Americans. In Philadelphia, with a population of nearly 200,000, there is only one public bathing establishment; in New York, with more than double the amount, I could discover only three; and these, I believe, are, in both cities, almost solely supported by foreigners.

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A bold Writer in one of our cheapest and least pretending, but by no means least meritorious periodicals, *Orr's Magazine of Domestic Economy* , lately proclaimed the

astounding fact—publish it not in Gath!—that, leaving mere savages out of view, “the English are the dirtiest skinned people in the world.” I would add—with the exception of the Americans, who seem to have a more than feline antipathy to ablutionary water. The same writer probably, in a recent work, the *Handbook of Cookery* , in treating on the carnivorous and medicamenivorous appetite of our country-folks, thus expresses himself, in words which would apply with double force to our transatlantic descendants:—

“Esculent vegetables possess medicinal properties, which might obviate the necessity of that eternal recourse to aperients—that horrible, dangerous, and ignorant abuse of calomel and drastics, which not only disgraces the medical profession in this country, but converts almost every father of a family—and often the mother too—into a gratuitous empiric. Costiveness, and a copious secretion of lithic acid—hence gout, gravel, stone, and the Lord knows what besides—are induced by an abuse of animal food in its most solid form; and a man so gorged, besides seeking relief in fermented liquors, must take cathartic pills, forsooth, to disburden him of the fruits of his intemperance! The family drug-compounder of course supplies him with box after box of pills, and his poor stomach is irritated and tortured, and often brought into a state of permanent disease, in order to relieve the lower bowels, where the evil lies, especially the colon, which is generally the seat of the obstruction. Why not apply the remedy to the part affected, instead of blistering your arm to cure a sore leg? The application of a simple enema” [“Oh the 203 monster!” I hear the Saxon woman-kind cry] “would administer more effectual relief, in a few minutes, than all the drugs in Apothecaries' Hall in as many hours; and surely the perfection which mechanical means have reached, render this an easy remedy.”

We have it on the authority of Aristotle, that the drama *purges* the mind. Accordingly, in the intervals of the other pastime, the Philadelphians do now and then find time to go to the theatre, especially when a *star* rises above their horizon. The most fashionable house, as I have already hinted, is that in Chesnut-street. The rival “native talent,” or rawhead-and-bloody-bones stage, on which are exhibited such pieces as are played at some of our minors, to the great delectation of the mob, is said to be found in Walnut-street. The

superior house tries to unite the three grand branches, tragedy, comedy, and opera, which in more civilized countries are usually treated separately; the effect, of course, is bad. The *ballet* they rarely attempt. They made one signal exception, however, very much to the profit of one Mrs. Céleste, whose small talent had been found very useful in the numerous *corps de ballet* of the Conservatoire: her they had palmed upon them as a second Taglioni! There were also pieces got up to introduce her pantomimic powers, which are respectable. One of those that I saw was founded on the incidents of the revolutionary war, in which she represented the part of a love-sick French girl, who feigns to be dumb, and follows her lover disguised as a drummer in one of La Fayette's auxiliary legions. 204 The lover is of course taken prisoner by the cruel English, and equally of course saved by her, after her virtue (!) has been attempted by the English officers, who were all represented in this piece as a set of cowardly cold-blooded scoundrels. Washington also figured in the piece; but, being played by an inferior performer, evidently on no friendly footing with the property-man, his leather-breeches were scandalously old and dirty. This “national drama” was plentifully besprinkled with claptraps about “star-spangled banners,” and the like; which, with the often-repeated strain of Yankee Doodle, clashings of swords, &c., made the affair, on the whole, go down well. Of their efforts at opera, I can speak more favourably, for I saw the *Sonnambula* tolerably well got up there—quite as well, indeed, as at any of our English houses out of London. The *Amina* was Mrs. Wood; the paltry lover was played (I speak of the part, not the man) of course by her husband. But, on this occasion, one of the audience interested me much more than any of the performers —this was Mrs. Butler, who sat in a stage-box with her husband.

“But oh! ye lords of ladies intellectual, Your spouses, have they not henpecked you all?”

I had never seen her act, and she had not to me the appearance of one of *Shakspeare's heroines* . Of a truth so small a body seems hardly great enough for the soul; but her eye is full of latent fire. The performance was for the farewell benefit of Mrs. 205 Wood, who was most “rapturously” received: I never should have given an American audience credit for so much enthusiasm for talent. And not the least demonstrative of her approbation,

was little Fanny Kemble. As I saw her rise in her seat, and throw a wreath at Mrs. Wood's feet in the last scene, I wondered if she did not regret leaving the stage, to pine, like “a dull weed, on Lethe's wharf,”—in the midst of the most unappreciating of all communities. I had, not long before, read Croly's “Married Actress,” and could not help thinking that certain passages in that admirable story might, peradventure, be applicable to her. Meantime, no one remarked her; all eyes, and apparently all hearts, were turned to the retiring singer, whose path was literally strewed with flowers. She, on her part, was quite overcome with so much kindness. When she attempted to express her thanks, she could only sob aloud; most of the ladies wept, and not a few of the men shed tears also. Mr. Wood, too, had his full share of the immense applause. It certainly was such a scene as I never saw in any theatre.

Now let us turn the medal. Whether it were that the Americans were ashamed of having been “so foolish” on this and other occasions, or that Mr. Wood had said something disrespectful of the star-spangled banner, or criticised the whiskers of President Jackson's cat, or whispered a hint that this thin-skinned nation was not the foremost in the world, I know not; what is certain is this, that in a 206 few days thereafter he was driven with execration and violence from the country. As for his lady, she was nearly brained with heavy missiles thrown at her by the audience of the Park theatre, New York. He was held up to public hatred by the sweet-mouthed newspapers as a “diabolical wretch,” a “foreign mountebank,” an “impudent hell-hound,” and other complimentary *gentillesses* of the like kind. Even captains of ships were adjured by them not to give either a passage; and all “true-born Americans” were menaced with rigid anathema, if they sat at the same board with such “vile miscreants.” A few years before, one Anderson, another public singer, had been chased out of the country in a similar manner; he being accused of having “spoken ill” of the Americans, on the passage out, but which charge he solemnly denied.

Americans are, in general, very little interested in European politics. Such an event as I have related, in such a city as Philadelphia, is a kind of godsend. But a never failing source of interest is found in the great number of fires that take place there; however,

they are never so destructive as in New York, and are only just sufficient to keep the public mind in a state of gentle excitement. Besides being built on a superior plan to the latter city, in Philadelphia great precautions are taken not to let the flames go too far. Still a fire there is worth going to see for once, if it were only to survey the congregation of happy faces it collects. I never saw but two, although scarce a night passed, during a stay of several 207 months, that I did not hear the State-house bell announce one or more. One took place within a few doors of my boarding house—time, Sunday morning. Every countenance was radiant with virtuous satisfaction at the unbought spectacle thus kindly provided for them. I am sure not even our execution-fanciers, that crowd, on occasions now happily rare, to the Old Bailey, could have been more joyous.

Great numbers of the young men of Philadelphia enrol themselves into a species of fire brigades, having gaily painted engines, hose, and equipments, at their own cost. There are terrible rivalries and consuming jealousies between these various companies—they of the “Hope” hating the persons and despising the prowess of the gentlemen of the “Fame,” &c. Being all volunteers—this service exempts them from that of the militia—they are under no general control of the City authorities; and it will sometimes happen, a dispute arising as to which troop arrived first on the ground, or as to who has the best right to take the lead, that an inflamed tenement will be consumed to the cellars, before the point can be settled which of the parties has the right to commence playing upon it. These quarrels do not always terminate without bloodshed; as I was a witness to, in the case of an immense drug-store in Front street, belonging to a German firm. A misunderstanding of this kind took place here, which ended in “a battle royal:” the combatants fought desperately, grappled each other by the throat, rolled about in the plash 208 arising from the running plugs, and rose exhausted, many of them, from the kennel, obscene with filth and gore. Meantime the fire, as may be supposed, had made much way; but by this time, their pugnacious ire being a little abated, they turned their attention to the burning pile, upon which they played with almost as much fury as they had fought, insomuch that there was every prospect of the lower and most valuable part of it being saved. Unhappily, however,

some insidious enemy of the proprietors spread a rumour among the firemen—which yet the suffering parties protested, too late, was a calumny—that the services “of the gentlemen firemen of the city” had just been spoken of in a slighting manner. In an instant, every arm was dropped, and the devoted house allowed to burn on to its foundations. The loss of property here was immense.—I am the more particular in stating facts which I know, because the Philadelphian system of fire-extinction has been cried up as a model. The Americans ought, as well as ourselves, to think more of fire-prevention, by using less timber in constructions. The very roofs are of wood, cut in slate-like squares, bearing the name of “shingles.” Upon contiguous houses, burning brands are sure to fall; and by this ready means alone, were there no other, will conflagrations spread.

If the “doings” of the Americans are great, their “sayings” are assuredly ten times greater. Public meetings in Philadelphia, for the delivery of speeches of distressing length, on every occasion (sometimes on no occasion at all), are incessant. Sometimes 209 they are holden “to protest,” sometimes “to congratulate,” at other times “to condole,” hardly ever to *subscribe* . A flagrant instance of this occurred in Philadelphia, on occasion of the ruinous fire at New York. Oh! what *lengthy* orations did we have, in the hall of the Exchange, from the wordy cohort who always present themselves at such times—oh! the eloquent and touching speeches, brim full of sympathy for “our suffering brethren”—such forests of hands too, (with nothing in them) held forth in behalf of the victims; that really any listener's heart must have swum in joy to think that there could be so much good feeling among the trafficking sons of men! And what did all this result in?—a subscription, the amount of which it would be shameful to name. Many an English nobleman would give a larger sum in a present to a deserving indigent family, than the whole inhabitants of this opulent city sent to the sufferers in New York. But one important point was gained: the numerous band, possessed with the *scabies loquendi* , had talked to their hearts' content; another public calamity occurring, they would be as ready to lend a helping tongue as ever—for he who (not gives, but)

“Talks and walks away, May live to talk another day.”

The only effective aid rendered by Philadelphia, was that afforded by the “monopolising monster”—the “liberticide” directory of the United States Bank.

I meant to have said something, ere this, on the P 210 society of Philadelphia; but I cannot communicate much on this head, from personal experience. So far as that went, I should certainly say, that many of its citizens are a stiff-mannered anti-social race; being so not merely as regards foreigners—of whom, it appears, they now stand in awe, under a dread, as they say, of being *Trollopised* —but they are so even among themselves. I was told by a gentleman, who had excellent opportunities of judging, that there were nine or ten distinct ranks in the city, beginning at the lower class of traders, and ending in the dozen or so who keep a carriage, and have a large establishment; each of these circles, repelling and repelled, carefully keeps itself apart, and draws a line that no one of doubtful status may pass. Dr. Johnson makes mention somewhere of the difficulty there would be in settling a dispute for precedence between a louse and a flea; and yet some such nice distinctions must sometimes arise among the arbiters of Philadelphian suitabilities.

Mr. Bulwer has drawn a striking picture of English anti-socialism and repulsiveness; and imputes it to our aristocratical institutions and abject idolatry of rank; how would he account, then, for an exaggeration of the same spirit in a country where the laws say “all men are equal,” and countenance no assumption of privileges of any kind? The fact is, the spirit of aristocracy forms a part of human nature; and, as some Frenchman says, “De toutes les aristocraties, la pire c'est celle de la bourse.” If it 211 be a proof of having arrived at the highest pitch of aristocratical exclusiveness, when, as Lord Byron says, “every body hates every body;” then are the richer Americans in general, and the “respectable” Philadelphians in particular, the most consummate aristocrats in the world.

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LETTER XIV. SABBATICAL OBSERVANCES IN AMERICA AND ENGLAND—THEIR INFLUENCE UPON GENERAL MORALS—PARTICULAR EXAMPLES.

The first Sunday turn-out I saw of the Philadelphian population, confirmed me in my opinion of the peculiar pride the Americans take in dress. There being no positive acknowledged degrees of rank among them, all the world wish to hide their humble stations as much as possible by imposing externals. It might be said of them with more truth than George the Fourth did of the Scotch, on seeing them in holiday attire, “They are a nation of gentlemen.” They are certainly, in outward things, a *distingué* people. As I looked, with much interest, at the vast numbers of well-apparelled females, no small proportion of them very beautiful, on their way to the different churches and chapels, I thought of the contrast this country must have presented, at the time of the revolutionary war, when the stock of articles of personal equipment ran so low, from poverty and stoppages of importation, that the ladies were fain to fasten their worn-out clothes with thorns, instead of pins; and when a good sewing-needle was thought worth lending from one distant farm-house to another.

Having ascertained which was the principal Episcopal place of worship, I was directed to Christchurch, and had, before entering, the satisfaction of hearing the familiar sounds of a peal of bells, rather imperfect indeed, but the only one I then knew of in, the country. The venerable Bishop White officiated. This patriarch of the, American church was consecrated to his sacred office in England, and had been chaplain to the first American congress: he died some days before I left. The members of the Episcopal community are not so numerous as those of some of the others in Philadelphia—the Presbyterians for instance; but they comprise a large portion of the prime families of the place. As the *élite* of the Americans are Tories in politics, so they are no less churchmen in religion. They seem to participate in the sentiments of old Herbert, as expressed in his “British Church:”

“I joy, dear mother, when I view Thy perfect lineaments, and hue Both sweet and bright:

A fine aspect in fit array, Neither too mean, nor yet too gay, Shows who is best: Outlandish looks may not compare; For all they either painted are, Or else undrest.”

Charles the Second said he thought Presbyterianism was no fit religion for a gentleman; the superior kind of Americans seem to think so too.

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Morning and evening service being ended, as I had as yet made few acquaintances, and as my letters of introduction were merely to houses of business, I found the city become miserably dull. Having lived for some years on the continent, and been rather unused to the deadness of all towns where the Protestant religion prevails, I began to call in question, in my private mind—perhaps wrongly—the utility of a total suspension of all amusement, and absence of agreeable relaxation. The Catholics, I thought, had done wisely, in coming to a compromise with poor human nature; and I doubted much whe-her the conduct of the many were much improved by the rigid observances imposed upon them by the few. I must own I have never been a strict Sabbatarian. I never could find the institution of a Christian Sabbath any where in the New Testament. I have long thought that the Jewish Sabbath, as part of the ceremonial law, and meant to be confined to the Jews, was, by implication, virtually abolished, and no other put in its place. See Matt. xii. 1–12; Luke xiii. 15–16, and other passages.

The first colonists of this country—the New England settlers particularly—were mostly rigid, not to say fanatical, Puritans; the principal distinction of these schismatics, after their bitter hatred of the Church, was their Judaical way of spending the Sunday; the freedom with which Christ made us free, was foregone by them. Not only so, but spiritual despotism was inconsistently mixed up with free political institutions; and seldom was intolerance carried 215 farther by the most bigoted Catholics, than by these pretended victims of spiritual tyranny at home. They thought fit to take exceptions against the Quaker sect in

particular, and passed a law, banishing them from certain of the new settlements under pain of death if they ever returned; I believe some individuals did actually get hanged in consequence. Their laws against infractions of sabbatical observance were rigorous to the last degree; and, as an instance, it is on record, that the head men of Salem punished the captain of a vessel with public flogging, for having saluted his wife in public; this poor man had not seen her for many months, and on his arrival, which unluckily for him happened to be the Sabbath, was naturally overjoyed to meet her. It is even said, that these gloomy bigots would never put malt to ferment near the end of a week, lest it should “work” on the Sabbath; and tied the legs of their dunghill fowls, to prevent them from gallanting the hens. Constables were employed to scour the streets for stragglers, with power to lay hands on violators of gloomy Sabbath sanctities, and force them into the conventicles; or, if refractory, to imprison and set them in the stocks.

Thus rigorously was the observance of the Sabbath established by the early Americans, and the influence of such institutions is felt even now. A punning Frenchman called a London Sunday “un jour de poudins de *plomb;* ” an American Sabbath is still more *leaden* . Yet does the sun go on his way rejoicing, the birds sing, the winds blow, the tides rise and fall—of a surety a ritual observance of Sabbath 216 has no sympathy in the visible creation; not to urge that the Sabbath in the synagogue of Pear-street, Philadelphia, has yet four hours to run, when that of the Jews of Duke's Place has finished; while in Palestine, for which, probably, the institution was alone meant, it has even ceased long before. No, the Sabbath has small foundation in external nature; has it any in the general mind of man? If I were captiously asked, Would you shut up the churches, and abolish religion? I would answer such a question by another, What has that to do with it? Do the continental Catholics shut up their churches because the theatres and concert rooms are open?

With respect to ourselves, is there any population in the world more immoral, more besotted, more degraded than ours?—and this, too, in despite of all sabbatical ordinances. If there have been a “reform” in politics since I left the country some ten years ago,

there has been none in morals. Look at the condition and habits of a great mass of the London lower classes—mark the crowds of squalid drunken men and wretched women on Saturday and Sunday evenings, with miserable infants in arms, “conceived in gin, and begotten in poverty.” What has the Sabbath yet done for them but add to their means of doing themselves harm?

Nothing has spread dissent from the Church all over the country so much as leaving the Sabbath evenings open to schismatical eloquence. Evening lectures, by Church divines, are certainly more common than they were; but it is too late to hope to lessen the amount of dissent by a rivalry in this way. 217 It would be more effectually done by encouraging public recreations after daily church service. The sects have committed themselves too much to sabbatarianism, to countenance any thing of this kind; and it is only the Church of England which can afford to relax. Once it had puritanical practice forced upon it, but these days are gone by.—Let us refer a little to history. In the year 1618, James the First published his declaration, called the Book of Sports, permitting certain pastimes, and commanded it to be read in all churches. The Puritans held up their hands in holy horror against the indulgence; but of all the principal clergy of the Church, Archbishop Abbot alone opposed himself to it, and would not allow it to be published in his diocese. He was a very mediocre man, and a cunning trimmer all along between his duties to the Church, and his popularity with the undermining Puritans; but unhappily in the end the latter gained the day. Thus we see that the suggestion of a relaxation is not new. If such were needful then, how much more now! when increased habits of confinement and lengthened hours of labour, are, by the progress of society, so much established. Holidays have almost ceased to exist; Sunday is the only instrument put into our hands, whereby to re-civilize a people relapsing into brutality, and make them withal happier and better. The very first step to an improved, a more moral state of things, will be TO OPEN THE THEATRES on Sunday.

This novel proposition may possibly startle many, 218 whom I would fain ask, Are not the pothouses and the brothels open already? Aye, but we are used to that! Yes, somewhat too much. Besides, vice may find a haunt in the nightly meeting-house as

well as the theatre. I have heard of chapels being made places of assignation as well as masquerades. If it is emphatically said, the Deity “dwelleth not (specially) in temples made with hands,” neither does the devil confine himself to certain special localities. Besides the theatres, I would also give access to concert rooms; these would present harmless attractions to many a young man who would else spend his Sabbath evening amid the grosser sensualities of the tavern or the stews. As for those who think the larger portion of the day spent in religious exercises not to be enough, after a week's close application to labour, let them go to sermon still; only let them put no personal restraint on others; neither let them make an unhandsome construction of the conduct of their weaker brethren; for the first of Christian virtues is charity.

Assuredly, before such a change as that proposed could be made properly instrumental in advancing public morals, the theatres ought to be put under better regulations than at present; some of the pieces played in many of the houses are certainly corrupting enough. But this is an evil that could easily be remedied. It arises, in great part, from the low ebb which the drama has sunk to, from various causes. There is no want of talent for dramatic writing amongst us, but it flows little in the 219 direction of the existing stage. Nothing would contribute to elevate the drama from its present depression so much as Sunday performances. Let some houses even be set apart for the performance of religious pieces. Miss Hannah More thought it no derogation to her delicate sense of religious propriety, to write “Sacred Dramas;” and possibly had the hope of their becoming one day available in this way. Of moral pieces we have few or none; but there is a great amount of talent in the country, which might be employed in producing such, with unspeakable advantage to the community. There is an American work, called “Temperance Tales,” which would furnish the groundwork of more than a score of excellent pieces that would be very profitable to the intemperate, and might tend much to rescue them from the degrading vice which threatens to sink our working population lower than the brutes. Let us lure them from their swilling-troughs, and recal them to virtue, by clothing her in an attractive dress; old means have failed, we ought therefore to try new.

And let not the moralist underrate, much less despise, the stage as a corrector of manners. Let it be borne in mind, that I speak of it as it might be made, not of it as it is. It is not many years since one of the judges of England said on the bench, that even the existing drama was well calculated to instruct as well as amuse mankind; but still I should be for purifying it, and exalting its character as much as possible. Nevertheless, corrupted though scenic representation may be, it has a beneficial, a 220 humanising effect on the minds of the better portions of the working class; no one well acquainted with them will ever think of disputing this. It creates a taste in the lower orders; it gives them a perception of the beautiful and the heroic. But for a liking to the drama, thousands of the gentler humble would be for ever ignorant of the lofty courtesies and refined sentiment to be found in the higher walks of life. But for it, they would know the feeling of love only in its grossest form; that of valour, in its most brutal. With respect to the higher classes, the drama is to them an elegant amusement; and the most harmless, as well as the most delightful, that has yet been discovered. It unites all the arts, poetry, painting, music, and is the master-piece of civilisation. As nothing sours a man's temper so much as unamused solitude, or shuts his heart so close against his species; on the other hand, the elevating equality, and cheerful association with all classes in a handsome theatre, are admirably adapted to call into exercise the best sentiments and kindliest sympathies with our fellows. And, as good feelings invariably tend to good actions, I say again, let not the enlightened moralist undervalue the acted drama.

Multitudes of well-disposed, regularly-conducted young men are to be found filling laborious commercial situations all the week, who are not able to bear the confinement of a church or chapel, up to a late hour of their only day of leisure; nor is it desirable, from a regard to their health, that they should. 221 Now what other proper means of recreation have they,—those from the country especially?—the latter have, most of them, neither relations nor connexions in this great metropolis. I was once in that forlorn position myself, eighteen years ago, on my arrival here; since then several literary institutions have indeed arisen, and it is admirable they should be so well attended by so many of small means and

little leisure; but they, too, are carefully closed against the subscribers on Sundays! Thus does leisure, which might be turned to profitable account, become a snare to very many, and a curse to not a few.

I have remarked that the most consummate blackguards I have ever heard of, both at home and in America, have ever been brought up in the most religious families. In the part of the country where I was “raised” (this strange term is good American), the more notorious scamps were all clergymen's sons. One of the most depraved characters, considering his youth, that any country could produce, was an individual already mentioned at p. 159, who was a kind of Don Juan in a small way. He was born in a village of Connecticut, and had had the advantage of a strictly moral and religious education. It is astonishing how ignorant some rigid parents are of their children's private minds and morals while at home with them. When they find it convenient, from narrowness of means, to send them to push their fortunes in large towns, and that just at an age when the youthful passions are getting strong, they think their sons go thither as so many unspotted lambs; and are astounded to find they do 222 not go on so well as they had confidently expected. They immediately think they must have fallen into ill company, which has “led them astray,” and seriously imagine there must be something corrupting in the very air of a city. Young Frederick Robinson, who kept a journal of many things he did and thought, chuckles at this confidence of honest and simple country parents in the good principles they have taken such pains to inculcate. In this singular production, which fell into the hands of the New York journalists, and might have been entitled “Some Passages in the Life of a Finished Blackguard,” he says, “Oh, if the old chap but knew how I passed my Sundays!” He was a young man of really superior talent, but of matchless depravity of heart. Having a gentlemanly exterior and pleasing manners, he was well received in classes superior to his own—for he was but a clerk in a wholesale house; and had paid his addresses to a young lady of some fortune, whom he was about to marry when his exposure took place. He had previously formed an attachment to Ellen Jewett, a woman of the town, of considerable personal attractions, and not unaccomplished; he was so

fascinated for a while with her, that he had promised to rescue her from degradation, and marry her. Besides finding himself trammelled with this indiscreet engagement, it was believed she possessed secrets about some pecuniary embezzlements that put it in her power to blast his character, and ruin his prospects for ever: thus did he find it convenient to put her out of the way, as soon as her love became importunate. It was evident to all who read the 223 journal above mentioned, which was full of reasoning vice of the blackest kind, that no scruples were likely to stop the hand from executing what such a mind would conceive. Accordingly, he made an appointment to pass the evening with Ellen at her lodgings, a splendid brothel in the city, between eight and nine o'clock one night; and she had agreed to be at home to no one but him, at the same time apprising her fellow “boarders” of the expected visit of her lover. The servant who let him in knew his person well, though that was muffled in a cloak, and there was a handkerchief held over his mouth. On this, as on former occasions, he passed by a feigned name. Having shown him up stairs, she heard Ellen open the door of her room, salute him with eager affection, chide him lovingly for not coming sooner, and re-enter it with him. By and by she came out to the landing-place, called for a bottle of champagne, and some other refreshments; these she took from the servant outside the door. No more was heard or seen of either that night; and the house was shut up, as usual, about twelve o'clock. An hour or so afterwards, some one was heard to grope his way out of the house by a private door, and climb the wall of the yard behind, which communicated with a narrow street. Early in the morning, the mistress of the establishment was disturbed in her rest by the smell of fire; and getting up to enquire about it, she found the bed-curtains and furniture of Ellen Jewett's room in a blaze, herself lying on the bed in her shift, and weltering in her blood 224 from some hideous wounds in the head—in fact, the hinder part of the skull beaten to pieces. Notwithstanding, her eyelids were closed as in a gentle sleep, and a tranquil smile still played upon the lip. It was supposed she had passed from life to death without the least consciousness.

Suspicion of course fell upon Robinson. He gave a most unsatisfactory account of how he had spent the evening in question. He said he had passed it partly at the theatre, partly in certain taverns, &c. Yet no box-keepers, check-takers, or waiters at the places indicated, to whom his person was well known, could be got to sustain any of his statements. The young man who usually slept in the same room with him, owned that he had not arrived at the usual time of retiring to rest, and said he had found him a-bed on the succeeding morning; but either could not, or would not, say at what hour he did come in. His clothes were examined, and marks of plaster and whiting found, such as any one climbing over a wall would be likely to get, and it was proved that he had borrowed a hatchet at his store a day or two before, but had never returned it; although afterwards it was found in its place, bearing the appearance of having been used and cleaned. He was thereupon arrested, and indicted for the murder.

His father, a farmer of some property, being sent for to New York, hired the most able counsel he could procure there, and sat beside him the whole time of the trial, which lasted several days. Being a man of a venerable appearance and unspotted character, 225 this had probably a great effect on the jury; so much so, that, added to the impression produced by the ingenuity and eloquence of the gentlemen of the bar, it determined them to give the acquittal they did, in the face of the strongest evidence; yet many scrupled not to say afterwards, that some of them were bribed. There was indeed a barefaced *alibi* got up at the eleventh hour; and never did Henry Erskine's definition of that legal term apply more truly than in this case. A lady asked him, “What is an alibi?” “Madam, it is a *lie* by which many a rogue escapes hanging.”—The party in question was a tobacconist, who swore that young Robinson came into his shop just as he was shutting up, namely at ten o'clock or thereabouts, when, as had been sworn by the people of the brothel, he was in Ellen Jewett's room, and had purchased some cigars, for which he was an occasional customer. It was added, however that Robinson never had thought of so important a circumstance himself; he had never even hinted at such a thing in any of his examinations; this “friend in need” called at the prison just before the trial, and, in the presence of the

jailer, after being told he could not see the culprit in private, proceeded to put what lawyers call leading questions to Robinson—who did not seem at first able to recognise him—beginning with, “Do you not remember, young man, coming,” &c. The ready reply was, “Of course, I do!” “And don't you recollect so and so?” “Oh yes, yes.” This positive swearing, added to the bad characters of some witnesses unavoidably called on in Q 226 such a case, and the profligate life of the unhappy woman, led to the very unexpected result. When, after great seeming hesitation, the jury brought in their verdict, “Not guilty,” the prisoner, who had looked the very picture of penitential shame, rose up in his place, and, with a face radiant with triumphant joy, held out a thankful hand to his able leading counsel; who shewed his sense of the *honour* by turning his back upon him. He changed his name, and left the place immediately. A few weeks thereafter all his father's property was sold, for reasons best known to themselves.

This affair attracted much notice all over the Union. The murderer and his victim were both extraordinary persons; handsome in person the one and the other, also very young, neither being much turned of twenty, and both of superior minds and acquirements. I had lent me a packet of her letters, which were handed about for private perusal in Philadelphia; they were addressed to a frail friend in that city, formerly an attached schoolfellow, and written in a diction that would have done no discredit to the most accomplished lady. No one could have gathered any information from *them* of the habits of the parties, had they not known of it beforehand. The handwriting was beautiful, and the style elegant and flowing, having all the charming feminine ease and playfulness, which no masculine talent can ever properly imitate. She was, in short, a VICTIM OF MODERN EDUCATION. Born of poor parents, who gave her instruction out of proportion with their 227 means, and who petted her from her cradle on account of her beauty and wit, she had grown up to womanhood in the unrestrained indulgence of self-will; and thus did she fall an easy prey to the first seducer of superior rank who presented himself. She had a great love for poetry, and wrote tolerable verses herself. She used always to say, that what first corrupted her morals, and turned her heart irresistibly to licentious courses, was

the continual perusal of Lord Byron's works, which accidentally fell in her way when quite young. Although not unaware of their baleful effects on her life, she longed passionately to have known his Lordship, whom she adored as a kind of divinity. For the rest, she was one of the most generous kindhearted creatures in the world, and merited a better fate.

“Say, Virtue, can it be a crime to pity The erring children of our common Sire— Of all his creatures is there one more curst Than she who smiles and fawns for doubtful bread?”

Multitudes of young men in America, sent from the villages and smaller towns to cities to “make their way,” there ruin themselves as effectually, if not so shamefully, as Frederick Robinson. They mostly go thither crammed with good advice too; and all with bibles and good books in their trunks, which, nevertheless, most of them forget to read. I knew one, who, on his return home, ill in health and low in purse, being anxiously asked, by a doting and very religious mother, if he had read two chapters daily, as he had promised to do, and she not being Q 2 228 altogether satisfied with his repeated assurances in the affirmative, examined the volume, and found a 20 dollar note still in the middle of it, where she had put it herself for his private use three years before.

No nation can be happy where the ties of relationship are little regarded. In America they are loose indeed. As a consequence, American parents in general find their offspring, in the Eastern states especially, amazingly apt to spring off. No children that ever I have seen, are so much spoiled with indulgence as the generality of them. No schoolmaster is allowed to chastise them on any account; he would be indicted for an assault if he did. In company they are all but insufferable, being treated as men and women long before their time. Urchins of seven or eight years old, for instance, instead of longing for lollypops, come to their parents boldly, and demand money to buy cigars!

To revert to my original subject of the Sabbath, I should say, that any relaxation in our system would be sure to be adopted by these Americans. They would follow every movement of ours, in this as in every thing else, even with exaggeration; just as the

spectres of the Brocken mountain answered to every gesticulation of the travellers on the opposite hills of the Harz.

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LETTER XV. PRETENDED ABSENCE OF POVERTY IN AMERICA—SEVERE WINTER THERE—FEMALE EMPLOYMENT—FANNY WRIGHT.

Miss Fanny Kemble, in her work on America, talks of the States being a land of plenty for all the industrious, and avers, that “no absolute want exists there for any one—at least there need not.” *Mrs. Butler* , no doubt, now knows better; the married has had better opportunities of knowledge than the single lady. A brilliant *promenade voyageuse de théâtre* could give her an idea only of the superficies of things, and she probably adopted, without examination, the common cant on the subject. The Americans are very fond of imparting to travellers this false idea of their “lovely country—their favoured land,” or at least of letting them take it up without contradiction; and as all crimes (poverty included) are laid exclusively to the charge of foreigners, there is thereby an ever-ready answer to those who wish to know why there is so much squalid misery in all their populous towns. I have seen scores of destitute homeless wretches lying on bulks, or under the sheds about the markets of New York and Philadelphia, as well as in such places of London; 230 and I have been an eye-witness to great misery, from cold and hunger, in the severe winter of 1835–6, such as probably was never experienced in our country. Coroner's inquests were being held, time after time, on the extenuated bodies of sufferers from privation; and subscriptions repeatedly talked of, but very little entered into. The “cheeks on population” are certainly now in as full operation in the American cities as with us; and small chance will there be of its increase going on any longer in the dreaded geometrical ratio. Oh that terrible book of Malthus! which might have taken for its text the converse of a favourite vulgar error—namely, “Where God sends *meat* he is sure to send *mouths* .” This transposition would give a more truthful turn to the words, and contain the whole essence of a volume which is often abused by many who have never read it. The present

population of the States is estimated at fourteen millions; it may take centuries before it doubles that amount, by natural increase at least.

During this winter, provisions more than doubled in price; and the poor, entirely left to the tender mercies of speculators, had to, pay sixteen dollars a cord (or waggon load) of wood, no better than I laid in early at four and a half. In New York the price ran up as high as twenty; this too with a climate cold enough to freeze the ink in my pen while writing in a stove-heated room, and where rain often turns to ice on the ground as soon as it falls. The railroads in the middle states were every where rendered 231 useless; and mail communications generally interrupted or stopped, up the country. In several lone houses, the inhabitants, cut off for many weeks from neighbourly assistance by the snow, were starved to death for want of supplies of necessary food. The wolves, too, thought fit to devour a coloured man at no great distance from Philadelphia. Some idea of the inclemency of this winter may be formed, when I state that it *snew* (an Americanism) eleven Sundays in succession; now all this was to clear away when God willed it—and not before—the city police being quite non-efficient. At times the streets were a series of glassy-surfaced undulations, which cut out much work for the bone-setters.

The ice on the Delaware was eight or nine feet thick, and the communication between Pennsylvania and New Jersey carried on across it with heavily loaded waggons. But *sleighing* , or sledging, was all the rage; it was a kind of madness among all classes who could afford to indulge in it. Americans seem as if they could be happy at rest nowhere; like a bed-ridden sick man, who seeks relief by incessant turning, so are they ever on the move. An ox roasted whole on the Delaware was one day thought a grand spectacle; it drew half of the city, on foot and in sledges, to see it. Was the meat given away to the poor? Oh no! but by paying threepence, any one could *see* it. If charity (money-giving) cover a multitude of sins, the Americans will scarcely have a rag to lay on their poor souls: admission to their public hospitals even, must be dearly paid for.

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Above all, the condition of the working females of the city (mostly single women) became truly pitiable. Their wages being always very low, the expenses of augmented board swallowed up their entire weekly wages—in a country, too, where decent clothes are very expensive, and even more than a necessary of life. The cries of distress from all quarters at length roused the attention of the small band of Philadelphian benevolists, with Matthew Carey, Esq. at their head; when on inquiry the amount of distress among the industrious women of the city, sempstresses, “tailoresses,” shoe-binders, book-folders, &c. was really appalling. Something, I believe, was done—I am sure nothing considerable—for its alleviation.

Very differently paid from the poor “tailoresses” are the “gentlemen tailors.” While the former, with the closest application, can seldom earn more than two dollars, the latter may earn from nine to twelve. The tailors are the best remunerated mechanics in America —and possibly the most discontented and troublesome to deal with. That scorn, real or feigned, for their useful calling, seems not to prevail there as it does among the lower orders of all European countries. This ridiculous contempt, I cannot help imagining, has come down to us from feudal times, when strength of body being most prized, and fighting the fashionable trade, the weakly or decrepit members of families were alone reserved for sedentary occupations. But as in America feudalism never existed, and as there money is all in all, high wages will make the members of any trade respected 233 and respectable. An American tailor thinks it beneath his dignity to make any thing but coats; waistcoats, trowsers, &c. are all made by females. Now what have they lost by this arrangement, so convenient for the women? Nothing. On the contrary, though fewer in number, they are much better paid. In all old countries, female labour is most wretchedly paid: unhappily young America forms no exception to the rule. Can there be any cause for this but the stupid and suicidal jealousies of the working men, which, by sending the other sex in crowds to a very few employments, leaves them entirely at the mercy of those who can engage them? Do these short-sighted men forget that they have, most of them, female connexions, wives, sisters, or daughters, and that if these could earn money, the well-

being of the men would be ultimately advanced? This helplessness, in a pecuniary sense —for money is power and independence too—forces on a thousand imprudent marriages and worse connexions, which keep the lower classes in a state of continual debasement. A respectable state of maidenhood is now considered a reproach. The men have given the word, and the silly women have echoed it; if single females were true to themselves, they would learn to despise their despisers. Would the interests of the lower orders of men suffer, if they postponed marriage till their future spouses had earned a sufficient sum to begin the world with creditably? Women are naturally more economical than we; and the money now all laid out in dress to attract a husband, would 234 then be applied to make him comfortable after they had him. But so long as their earnings are so low, and their means of employment so scanty, there is little chance of much good being done in this way. Verily, it is not fair.

There are really very few trades that women might not follow, or at least take a part in; and yet, judging by what we see in the mercers' shops of London, it seems to require the strength and address of a man to measure out ribands or unrol pieces of stuff to make a gown withal. In America generally, as I have said, a great part of the tailoring is in female hands. In New England, all or nearly all the cotton-spinning in the factories is performed by women; there too, in large printing establishments a great portion of the printer's compositor branch is done by them, and well done too. The correction of proofs is considered the most difficult part of the divided labour of printing; and yet the most accomplished corrector in Paris, is Madame Bertrand, wife of the bookseller of that name, once Miss Schultze, of Poland street; while in London there is another lady, Mrs. E—, scarce inferior to her; and there may be many others. But then it is to be observed of those factory women and compositresses, that they cannot leave the district where they have been taught, so as to exercise their calling elsewhere; besides being more closely bound by family ties than men, the artisans of the fair sex would be subjected to the contempt and ridicule, if not persecution, of mechanics of the unfair sex; thus are they put too much

in the 235 power of employers, who, as a matter of course, will take an unhandsome advantage of them.

Wars among mankind, and prostitution among womankind, are the great plague-sores of society; unenlightened poverty is the nurse, if not the parent of both. Personal independence and moral education beget self-respect; and when this shall have been properly called into action, neither sex will be found so subservient to the purposes of carnal lust, or to that of political aggression, as they have hitherto been. In no cities of Europe are prostitutes more numerous in proportion to the population, than in New York, Philadelphia, and Baltimore; this fact alone, convinced as I am of poverty being the great originator of prostitution, would prove to me that the supposed comfort and prosperity of the lower orders of America is little better than a delusion. Miss Sedgwick has said, that in the United States there is but one alternative for poor females of the gentler sort who have been delicately brought up—either to keep a school or a boarding house; and these occupations she describes as seldom realising more than the wages of menial labour. Of boarding-houses, we have in England too few to count for any thing in the affair; but of schools, such as they are, we have no lack. We have also shoals of half and quarter educated poor things calling themselves “governesses,” who are daily let loose upon society to an appalling and ever-increasing extent. Many thousands of ambitious mothers of the “only productive” classes 236 now-a-days may be heard to utter such a dire threat as the following:—

“I do intend, with God's good blessing, To send my *gals* a governessing.”

Notwithstanding the schoolmaster is now said to be abroad (abroad he certainly is, much more than at home) the thick ignorance that prevails in even highly respectable families is astonishing, when so many impostors can be palmed upon them: pretending to teach everything, most of them can in reality teach nothing. I know of one myself, for instance, now resident in the family of a professional gentleman, who has been so badly grounded even in the humble science of arithmetic, that when she buys a yard of ribbon for herself

she can never tell how much change she ought to take. Once I heard her try to count the monthly portions of her yearly salary, but it baffled her completely, and she gave it up in despair; yet several children are entirely dependent on this ignoramus for their instruction in that as well as other “branches,” of which she is equally ignorant! “They manage things better in France,” in this respect as in many others. The government there has created competent boards for examination into the capabilities of public and private teachers, both male and female, which grant the indispensable *diploma* only to the competent. But does the bargain-loving English public deserve any better treatment than it gets? How can families ever expect a dozen different branches to be imparted to their children, of 237 which there are several that separately require a lifetime to learn properly; for all which they are only to pay from thirty to forty pounds a year?—a paltry sum, and scarce so much as they give to a hard-handed menial. Some folks find a conscience too dear to keep.

A recent writer on the subject, Madame Beraud Riofrey, herself once a teacher, has shown that governesses, capable of teaching the various branches now demanded in modern education, must have laid out from £800 to £1000 in their own instruction; and that for such, £200 a-year would not be too great a salary. Are girls, therefore, to remain uneducated? no, but even sheer unpretending ignorance is better than a semblance of showy accomplishments. As for music, it has been well observed—

“No martyrology can furnish a thousandth part of the victims that have been sacrificed to the forced music mania of England. If we had the power to ascertain by vote how many persons of the fashionable world are bored by elaborate instrumental music and mechanical singing, we should find thousands who would wish, with Dr. Johnson, that it were not merely difficult, but quite impossible. If pleasure is expected from merely instrumental music, unaccompanied by a genuine voice, the end of so much expense and trouble is not attained; neither is drawing, without the power of original design, worth any very heavy expense. A graceful mien, however, a richly stored mind, and the power of *self-government* , are happy possessions, whose influence is far beyond any mechanical skill of the hands. Let not then the superficial things, which are so early laid aside, be preferred

by parents in the choice of a governess to the precious attainments, which, when once they are imparted to her, last the pupil through life. Let them 238 listen to Madame Riofrey, and be convinced that these excellences cannot be united with *several* professorships of the arts in *one* person, either in the teacher or the taught. She truly says:—'From the general view taken of education, it would seem that we were born only for pleasure, that our path through this world was to be strewed with roses, and that twenty or thirty years of our existence could pass, without any event occurring that required the exertion of our judgment, or called for any strength of mind or the assistance of religion.'"

It is painful to reflect, that from this class of incapables—spoilt for housewives, yet unfit for teachers, and quite unsuitable as companions—or, lower still, from among young women in situations of household servitude, the very best of our sex in the middle classes, who may not have the means of establishing themselves in business, are obliged to select their wives, or go without. A cruel alternative!

I know not whether I ought to set down itinerant lecturing as one of the employments fairly falling within the women†s province; but our notorious countrywoman, Fanny Wright, has contrived to pick up more money in that way than any half-dozen industrious tailoresses, so much her superiors in genuine respectability. After long lecturing against marriage, after a most immoral fashion, she now lays claim to be married herself, and bears the title of *Madame Darusmont* . Who the man may have been that had the courage and *taste* to couple himself to such a grim ogress, I cannot imagine; but it is strange, and says little for "philosophic" consistency, that Mrs. Woolstoncraft in England formerly, Madame Dudevant (George Sand) in France, and 239 now the other woman (?) in America, all three bitter railers against matrimony, have been unable to live without husbands. Why, even the most back-sliding believers in the religion which they have vilified, and do so mortally abhor, could not have evinced so great a discrepancy between precept and practice as this.—I had the curiosity, when in Philadelphia, to go and hear part of one of her lectures at the Military Hall there. It was on "the rise and progress of Liberty in America"—a subject of which, I could plainly see, this venomous vixen knew as little as

I do of the administrative details of the two penny post-offices in Pekin. I heard her utter sundry blasphemies against the Federalists—Colonel Hamilton, Mr. Jay, &c.—whom she accused of being the corrupters of the mind of Washington, and the betrayers of their country for “English gold” (!), and predicted all sorts of calamities on the country and its present rulers, for not carrying democratical principles far enough. Her lectures ultimately produced so much excitement, that the city authorities got her turned out of the hall—and this most despotically, although properly; thereupon she took to the fields: a public *row* put an end to that. Fanny cried out against oppression, and she was right, so far; but alas! “liberty-loving” men are often quite as inconsistent as marriage-hating women.

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LETTER XVI. GENERAL LEGISLATURE, GOVERNMENT, AND JUSTICIARY OF THE UNITED STATES.

The General Legislature, or CONGRESS, of the United States, consists of two chambers, a Senate and House of Representatives; and, constitutionally, must assemble once a year, on the first Monday of December, when a message is delivered to them by the President.

The Senate , or upper house, consists of forty-eight members, chosen by the legislatures of the several states, each sending two. They are elected for six years, one-third going out by rotation every two years. The Vice-president of the United States is president ex-officio of the Senate. He has no vote, except when the numbers are equal.

The members of the HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES are elected by every state in the union, each sending representatives in proportion to its population, at the rate of one member for every 47,700 persons. The suffrage in the electors may be considered as universal. The members sent by each state respectively are in the following proportions: —Maine, 8; New Hampshire, 5; Vermont, 5; Massachusetts, 12; Rhode Island, 2; Connecticut, 6; New 241 York, 40; New Jersey, 6; Pennsylvania, 28; Delaware, 1; Maryland, 8; Virginia, 21; North Carolina, 13; South Carolina, 9; Georgia, 9; Alabama, 5;

Mississippi, 2; Louisiana, 3; Tennessee, 13; Kentucky, 13; Ohio, 19; Indiana, 7; Illinois, 3; Missouri, 2. Total, 240. The territories of Florida, Michigan, and Arkansas, sent, in 1835, each one delegate to Congress, who had seats, but not votes.

The members of the Senate and House of Representatives are paid 8 dollars per day (32s.), and are allowed 8 dollars for every twenty miles' distance, as travelling expenses, going and returning. The speaker of the lower house has 16 dollars a-day.

Each State is within itself a government, with its particular laws, revenue, and expenditure. In the finances of the United States, as a federal government, the State revenues and expenses should not be overlooked; for although not entered in the general budget, they form equally a part of the general public burden and expenditure. The different state legislations have no share in the general elections to the House of Representatives, but they have the right to send a member each to Congress, who is entitled to sit and to speak, but not to vote.

Elections to the House of Representatives take place every two years.

The Senate .—No person can be a senator under thirty years of age. It has the sole power of trying all impeachments. Convictions require two-thirds of members to concur. If a president be impeached. the chief-justice to preside.—All bills for raising revenue R 242 shall originate in the House of Representatives, but the Senate may propose or concur with amendments as on other bills.

House of Representatives .—Every member must have attained the age of twenty-five, and been seven years resident in the United States.

Every bill which passes the two houses, before it can become a law, must be presented to the President. If he approves, he signs it; if not, he returns it with objections to the House wherein it originated, who thereupon reconsider it. If still approved of by two-thirds of each House, it nevertheless will become law.

The powers of Congress are, to levy taxes, reserving the rights of the State governments; to borrow money; to regulate commerce; to coin money; to establish post-offices, and post-roads; to constitute tribunals inferior to the supreme court—the latter being already established by act of the original Constitution; to declare war; and support armies and a navy, for two years only; to call out the militia, &c. &c.

The President —is elected by a body of distinct electors, qualified within each State. Each State shall appoint, in such manner as the legislature thereof may direct, a number of electors, equal to the whole number of senators and representatives to which the State may be entitled in the Congress; they shall name in their ballots the persons voted for as president and vice-president, and these they are to transmit sealed to the seat of government, 243 directed to the president of the senate. These are opened in presence of the two houses, and the result is declared.

No one but a natural-born citizen can fill this office. He must have attained the age of thirty-five, and been fourteen years resident in the country. He is commander-in-chief of every species of force. He has power, by and with the concurrence of two-thirds of the senators, to make treaties. With the same concurrence he appoints ambassadors, public ministers, consuls, judges of the supreme court, and certain other officers. He has the power, on extra-ordinary occasions, to convene the two houses; and in case of disagreement between them, with respect to time of adjournment, may adjourn them at his own discretion. Finally, he receives ambassadors, &c.; in general watches over the execution of the laws, and commissions all the officers of the United States. In case of death, or other constitutional disability, the Vice-president takes his place *ad interim* . The President's salary is fixed at 25,000 dollars (5000 *l.*) that of the Vice-president 5000 (1000 *l.*)

The Cabinet , or Privy Council, is composed of—1. The *Secretary of State* , whose functions combine those of the Home and Foreign Departments in England.—2. *Secretary of the Treasury* . He superintends the fiscal concerns of the government, and, upon his

responsibility, recommends to Congress measures for improving the condition of the revenue, which is principally made up of imports collected at the custom-houses on imported foreign goods, and moneys R 2 244 arising from the sale of public lands. All public accounts are finally settled at the Treasury department.—3. *Secretary at War* . The attributions of this office are much the same as ours in England.—4. *Secretary of the Navy* . Is assisted by a Board of Naval Commissioners for the regulation and government of the navy. The salary of all these officers is the same—viz., 6,000 dollars, or 1,200 *l.*

Post-office. —5. The *Postmaster-General* has the sole appointment of all the postmasters, the making all contracts for mails, and the general direction of his department. Salary, 6,000 dollars.

The Post-office revenue has been principally expended on improvements, by which means the regular conveyance by mail, of letters, newspapers, pamphlets, and even closely printed works published in parts (and dated), are conveyed to the remotest territorial settlements at very low rates (the latter particularly). The following are the rates of postage for *Letters:* 30 miles, 3 *d.* ; 80, 5 *d.* ; 150, 6½ *d.* ; 400, 10 *d.* ; over that distance (say 2,000 miles or more) 1 *s. Newspapers:* 100 miles, ½ *d.* ; over that, ¾ *d. Magazines and Pamphlets:* For each sheet (sometimes as large as a blanket), 100 miles, ¾ *d.* ; beyond that, 1¼ *d.* ; works not *pretending* to be periodicals, 100 miles, 2 *d.* ; over that, 3 *d.* —Franking is allowed to members of Congress and government head-officers, as in England.

The Postmaster-General stated, in a letter to a committee of the Senate, January 19, 1833, that it 245 was of daily occurrence that more than a ton weight of newspapers was carried in one mail for hundreds of miles together: since that time the mode of dating books, printed in parts, to send them by mail every where, has been found out; much to the increase of printing, if not to the ease of the horses. Amount of postage returned on newspapers for one year, 1831–2, came to about £60,000.

Seat of Government. —IN the city of Washington, district of Columbia. The Congress has the same particular powers there, as the legislature of each State has within its own bounds. All the above functionaries are there resident.

The Mint. —This establishment is seated in Philadelphia. It is lawful for any person to carry gold and silver to be coined at the Mint, where it is assayed. If below standard purity, expense of refining to be paid. The treasurer is not obliged to receive a less quantity of gold than D.20, or 200 of silver. The dies, both in design and execution, are miserably bad.

The coins are the eagle, or 10-dollar piece; half eagle, and quarter eagle; pieces of £2, £1, and 10 *s.* value. The silver dollar, or 4 *s.* -piece, is divisible into ½,¼, and 1–10th portions. But payments of £1 or more are generally paid in public or private bank paper. There is likewise a good deal of old Spanish royal and republican Mexican money in circulation; also 5-franc French pieces. 100 cents, as the name implies, make a dollar; and this decimal division of money much simplifies commercial calculations.

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Salary of 6. *Secretary* (director) *of Mint* , 6000 dollars.

In 1835 one-dollar notes were everywhere in circulation. Early in 1836, they were cried down in the middle States, and no smaller taken in payment than fives. At the time of the late panic caused by stoppage of cash payments, the country was deluged with paper, and specie for a time totally disappeared. Sovereigns were sold for D.5,60 c. of the best notes. Meantime vast numbers of houses, some with capital but most without—yea even petty “stores”—issued whole reams of notes; some of these were for very small sums, many as low as 5 cents (2½ *d.*); they must have been something like the French *assignats* , only having nothing to *assign* upon. It is easy to imagine what plundering of the labouring classes must have been going on all the while; at a time, too, when every kind of business was at a comparative stand-still.

Forgery is always carried on to a frightful extent in America. One Bicknell, a money-changer in Philadelphia, issues a thick periodical pamphlet called “The Detector,” that details the particular marks by which counterfeit notes may be known; and, to such an extent is forgery carried on, that it is necessary to issue a new one every two months. Great talent must be employed in this nefarious trade, for the American paper is generally beautifully engraved, and difficult to imitate.

JUDICIARY OF THE UNITED STATES.

Art. III. Sec. 1. *of the Constitution.* —“The judicial power shall be vested in one Supreme Court, and in such Inferior Courts as Congress may, from time to time, establish. 247 The judges both of the Supreme and Inferior Courts shall hold their office during good behaviour. Their salary to remain the same while in office.”

Sec. 2. “The judicial power shall extend to all cases, in law and equity, arising under the Constitution and laws, and extend to treaties made under their authority; to all cases affecting ambassadors, &c.; to admiralty and maritime jurisdiction; to controversies where the United States shall be a party; to controversies between two or more States; between a State and its citizens claiming lands, and between the different States and foreigners. In all cases affecting ambassadors, &c., in which any State shall be a party, the Supreme Court shall have original jurisdiction. In all other cases before mentioned appellate jurisdiction, both as to law and to fact, under regulation of Congress. The trial of all crimes, except in cases of impeachment, shall be by jury, and such trial shall be held in the State where said crimes have been committed: but when not committed in any State, then Congress to direct where trial shall proceed.”

Sec. 3. “Treason against the United States shall consist only in levying war against them, or in adhering to their enemies, giving them aid and comfort. No person shall be convicted of treason except on the testimony of two witnesses to the same overt act, or on confession in open court. The Congress shall have power to declare the punishment

of treason; but no attainder of treason shall work corruption of blood or foreiture, except during the life of the person attainted."

Art. II. Sec. 4. "The President, Vice-President, and all civil officers of the United States, shall be removed from office on impeachment for, and conviction of, treason, bribery, or other high crimes or misdemeanors."

There have been constituted one Supreme Court, thirty-one District Courts, and seven Circuit Courts. 248 The Supreme Court has one Chief Justice, and six Associate Justices. Salary of the former, five thousand dollars; of each of the latter, four thousand five hundred. Attorney-General, four thousand. It is held annually at Washington; and each Justice attends a Circuit, comprising two or more districts. A justice of the Supreme Court, and the judge of the district, preside in each Circuit Court. A District Court is presided in by the District Judge alone. Appeals are allowed from the District to the Circuit Courts in cases where the matter in dispute exceeds fifty dollars in value; and from the Circuit Courts to the Supreme Courts, when of 2,000 dollars value.

Each court has a clerk, a public attorney or prosecutor, and a marshal: all appointed by the President, except the clerks, who are named by the Court. His appointings are made by and with the advice of the Senate.

The judges are removable only on impeachment.

The trial of issues in fact, in the Supreme Court, in all actions at law against American citizens, is by jury.

A final judgment or decree in any suit in the highest court of law or equity in a State, may be reexamined and reversed, or affirmed in the United States Supreme Court.

Circuit Courts. —They have original cognizance, concurrently with the State Courts, of all suits of a civil nature at common law or in equity, where the thing litigated exceeds 500

dollars value. No suit, can be brought before Circuit or District Courts, 249 against a citizen by original process, except in the district wherein he may be found on serving the writ. The Circuit Courts have appellate jurisdiction from final decrees and judgments in District Courts for any greater value than fifty dollars. They have also jurisdiction of certain cases removeable into them, before trial, from the State Courts. The trial of issues in fact in the Circuit Courts in all suits, except those of equity and of admiralty or maritime jurisdiction, is by jury.

District Courts. —They have, exclusively of the courts of the several states, cognizance of all crimes and offences that are cognizable under the authority of the United States, committed within their respective districts, or upon the high seas where no other punishment than whipping not exceeding thirty stripes, or a fine not exceeding one hundred dollars, or not more that six months' imprisonment, is inflicted, also original exclusive cognizance of all civil causes of admiralty and maritime jurisdiction over small vessels and petty seizures. They have cognizance, concurrently with the courts of the several states, or their circuit courts, of all causes where an alien sues for a *tort* only in violation of the law of nations or a treaty of the United States. They are also cognizant concurrently, as last mentioned, of all suits at common law, where the United States sue for 100 dollars value. Trial of issue in fact is by jury; with exceptions as for Circuit Courts.

No judge of the United States is permitted to practise the law, either as counsel or attorney.

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The salaries of the judges of the District Courts range from 1000 to 3,500 dollars.

N.B.—The common law of England was adopted by the Republic after the revolution; and although altered and modified by acts of congress, it may be still considered as the text-book of the American lawyer. No question, the indictment against the Trades Unionists,

mentioned at page 122, was founded on the English common law, for American practice furnished no precedents.

The State Governments. —Each has its separate constitution, legislature, and justiciary. As at the head of the general government is placed the President, so every state has its Governor, invested with powers somewhat similar. The differences between one state government and another, are not very considerable. I propose to give that of New York, the most populous, perhaps the leading, state in the Union; it was founded in 1821. The constitution of Philadelphia assumed its present form in 1790; it seems not to have given universal satisfaction, however (see page 130), as a convention is now sitting for the purpose of amending it.

Outlines of the Constitution of New York .—The Executive power is in a Governor, elected every two years by the people. At the same time a Lieutenant-governor is also chosen, who is president ex-officio of the Senate; on whom, in case of the resignation, impeachment, death, or absence of the governor from office, the power and duties of government devolve.

The legislative power is vested in a Senate of thirty-two members, chosen for four years, and an assembly of one hundred and twenty-eight members, elected annually.

For the election of the Senators, the State is divided into eight districts, each being entitled to choose four Senators, one of whom is elected every year. The members of the Assembly are chosen by counties, and apportioned according to population.

The legislature meets yearly at Albany, in January.

The constitution grants the right of suffrage, in the election of public officers, to every white male citizen of twenty-one years of age, who has been an inhabitant of the State one year previous to each election.

The Chancellor and State judges are appointed by the Governor with consent of the Senate. The Chancellor and Justices of the Supreme and Circuit State Courts hold their offices during good behaviour, or until sixty years old. The Judges of the County Courts, or Courts of Common Pleas, are appointed for five years only.

Of the Executive officers the Governor receives a salary of 4000 dollars; Comptroller, 2500; Deputy-Comptroller, 1,500; Treasurer, 1,500; Secretary of State and Superintendant of Commonwealth Schools, 1,500; Attorney-General, 1,000. The members of the Senate and Assembly have each three dollars a day in Session time.

Of the judicial functionaries, the Chancellor of the Court of Chancery receives 2,000 dollars; Chief Justice of the Supreme Court, and two associated Justices, each 2,000.

There are eight Circuit Courts, one in each Senate district, with eight judges; these have a salary of 1250 dollars each.

The materials of the foregoing abstract have been all carefully drawn from authentic sources, and 252 though familiar to some, may be useful, for reference, to many.

It will be seen that the President can refuse his assent to a bill in certain cases; and that if full two-thirds of the houses do not insist on its becoming law, his single opposition will be fatal to it. This did take place a few years ago, on occasion of the renewal of the United States Bank charter. The majority In its favour was considerable, but it fell a trifle short of the exigible two-thirds of the collective votes. In flatly refusing his assent, the late President certainly stretched his prerogative to the utmost; for he had probably five-sixths of the property and intelligence of the country arrayed against him. We shall see whether his successor, who seems to look rather dwarfish in his unbuckled armour, will be able like him to “go the whole hog.” Jackson also removed the government deposites from the care of “the monster,” and dispersed them among banks of less account, said to be his pets, some of whom have since failed.

If the salary of the President is sufficiently low, his patronage nevertheless is immense; as he has many thousand offices at his disposal. It is probable that he has more real power also than our Sovereign and all her ministers put together. There is no doubt that the continuance of the federal compact was put in imminent jeopardy by President Jackson's obstinacy—or patriotism, if you like. But had his patriotism been of the purest water, would he have hazarded an evil of such magnitude as the dissolution 253 of the Union, for any inferior consideration whatever? If his system fall to pieces in the less firm hands of his successor and the “kitchen cabinet,” the absurdity as well as danger of his wrong-headed policy will be apparent to all the world. The triumphs of mere brute masses, who were certainly on his side in that affair, can never endure but for a very brief season.

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LETTER XVII. “CHEAP GOVERNMENT.”

Three or four years ago, President Jackson, in his annual Message, had occasion to detail the particulars of an “equitable adjustment” he had made with the hapless reliques of the Indian tribes. In this document the General grew quite philosophical—not to say philanthropic—on the superiorities of civilisation. His countryman Franklin has said, the great privilege of a civilised man is his rationality, which enables him to justify what he has done or has a mind to do, whether that may be justifiable or not. Accordingly the General made out that the conduct of the American government in that affair was quite a model of humanity and tender consideration for the feelings of the red man. He stated, that among other arrangements “new locations” were assigned to them in the then far west; to which they had been removed at the government expense, to prevent “daily misunderstandings” (that is, sanguinary quarrels) between them and the remoter settlers. Scarcely had these Indians, however, quitted the forest lands and “the graves of their fathers,” with piteous regrets, than the current of civilisation still rolling westward with unexpected force, and the enterprising settlers finding them 255 much in their way, peremptorily bade them still “move on.” As they had made a solemn compact with the

general government, and their chiefs had been to Washington to arrange matters with their “great father,” they were in no hurry to obey the order; and the consequence was, the encroachments and violence of the colonists brought on a barbarous and desolating war, which, during the latter part of my stay in America, had extended its ravages on a frontier line of full 2000 miles' extent. Neither of the contending parties were altogether to blame for this cruel state of things, for both of them had been imposed on: the fact being, that the western state governments, acting in open contempt of all decency and the arrangements of Congress, had sold the reserved Indian grounds to unprincipled land-jobbers, who in due course parcelled them out, at temptingly low rates, to unconscious purchasers. The aborigines of America, like those of England fearing to be driven at last “right slick” into the sea by their invaders, determined to make a stand. Their forbearance, however, was great; some months of delay passed before the heads of their tribes would allow them to act in concert against the white faces.

In the meantime they sent to their “great father” the general, who was naturally scandalized at the Punic faith of the western states; he remonstrated, he waxed wroth, but all in vain. He knew, too well, that he was at the head of a “cheap government,” and that public safety was compromised, as 256 well as national honour; for he had not, for many months, a single soldier at his disposal, that he could send to the menaced frontiers. Accordingly the “Seminole war” broke out, with all its savageries, its manifold slaughters and burnings. The luckless settlers were taken quite by surprise, and suffered accordingly. At last, seeing the government not able to do any thing for them, and the militia coming in but slowly from the contiguous states, they had to quit their occupations altogether, the resolute to combine and defend themselves, the timid to flee the country.

Now this question arises,—A government which fails in its first duty, the protection of its subjects from exterior or interior violence (of the latter hereafter), *can* it be too cheap? No; to use an expressive vulgarism, it ought to be “dirt cheap.” When the publicists and politicians of the United States, at the time of the French indemnity affair, were railing at the bad faith of the Chambers, and the rashness if not duplicity of Louis Philippe and

his ministers, in signing a treaty “without proper warrant,” I could not help thinking of the broken covenant with the poor Indians. While on this subject, I may remark by the way, that within a few weeks of the time I write, the Americans have, by what they may think an opportune accident, got rid of some hundreds of these same troublesome Indians. They were embarked in an old crazy steam-boat, which had been hired, at a cheap rate, to take them to some distant part of the great western wilderness; and most of 257 them were drowned. Had this *noyade* been brought about by design (which of course it was not), instead of resulting from a “conscientious economy” of government money, it still would have been merciful, compared with the protracted misery probably in store for survivors.

This Seminole war, and the venturous menaces of General Jackson against France, on the Indemnity question, set the wiser heads of the nation a thinking on the defenceless state of the country. True, the President presented his unloaded pistol to the head of the reluctant party, not without effect; but it was a hazardous movement, and might have brought on a war with a nation the best prepared for it of any in the world. France had at that time nearly half a million of soldiers a-foot, and a formidable marine of 300 vessels of all sizes, The bulk of the nation were happily ignorant of the danger their President's policy ran them into; most of the people of the States having the comfortably confident spirit of the barbarous Falatah tribes of Africa, mentioned by the Landers as having the opinion of themselves that, “were it not for the salt water lying between, they might conquer the whole world!” Had the French magnates not been more considerate than the American President and his “kitchen cabinet,” and let them put their threats in execution, the indemnity exactors would soon have called out with *Sir Andrew Ague-cheek* , “Plague on't, an I had known he had been so cunning of fence, I'd have seen him damned an I'd have challenged him. Let him S 258 [them] let the matter slip, and I'll give him [them] my horse, grey Capilet [*i.e.* renounce the indemnity].”

The lucky result of these perilous bravadoes, no doubt gave great grace to the President's retirement. He is one of your men of a very ordinary stamp—falling under the classification of those whom Shakspeare describes as having “greatness thrust upon them.” It is said he

laughed to scorn the first mention of his being put in nomination for the presidency; yet he filled the office two terms, and perhaps might have been re-elected a second time had he so willed it; but it is understood in America, that it would be presumption in any one ever to exceed the bounds that Washington prescribed for himself.

In the late very small augmentation of the national force, the Congress has shewn its usual niggard spirit of ill-judging economy. The Americans are understood to have invincible prejudices against a standing army. I should think the western settlers must by this time be cured of such a prejudice, and wish they were a little more taxed, and a great deal better protected. The militia was long waited for, and, when it was tried, found wanting: yet this force has been always the great reliance of the Americans.

Did they ever listen to the opinion of the sagacious Paley on this head? I am tempted to give, unabridged, his masterly exposition of the subject, although the extract will be long:—

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“The closeness, regularity, and quickness of movements; the unreserved, instantaneous, and almost mechanical obedience to orders; the sense of personal honour, and the familiarity with danger, which belong to a disciplined, veteran, and embodied soldiery, give such firmness and intrepidity to their approach, such weight and execution to their attack, as are not to be withstood by loose ranks of occasional and newly-levied troops, who are liable by their inexperience to disorder and confusion, and in whom fear is constantly augmented by novelty and surprise. It is possible that a militia, with a great excess of numbers, and a ready supply of recruits, may sustain a defensive or a flying war against regular troops; it is also true that any service, which keeps soldiers for a while together, and inures them by little and little to the habits of war and the dangers of action, transforms them in effect into a standing army. But upon this plan it may be necessary for almost a whole nation to go out to war to repel an invader; beside that a people so unprepared must always have the seat, and with it the miseries, of war, at home, being utterly incapable of carrying their operations into a foreign country.

“From the acknowledged superiority of standing armies, it follows, not only that it is unsafe for a nation to disband its regular troops, whilst neighbouring kingdoms retain theirs; but also that regular troops provide for the public service at the least possible expense. I suppose a certain quantity of military strength to be necessary, and I say that a standing army costs the community less than any other establishment which presents to an enemy the same force. The constant drudgery of low employments is not only incompatible with any great degree of perfection or expertness in the profession of a soldier, but the profession of a soldier almost always unfits men for the business of regular occupations. Of three inhabitants of a village, it is better that one should addict himself entirely to S 2 260 arms, and the other two stay constantly at home to cultivate the ground, than that all the three should mix the avocations of a camp with the business of husbandry, By the former arrangement, the country gains one complete soldier, and two industrious husbandmen; from the latter it receives three raw militiamen, who are at the same time three idle and profligate peasants. It should be considered also, that the emergencies of war wait not for seasons. Where there is no standing army ready for immediate service, it may be necessary to call the reaper from the fields in harvest, or the ploughman in seed-time; and the provision of a whole year may perish by the interruption of one month's labour. A standing army, therefore, is not only a more effectual, but a cheaper, method of providing for the public safety, than any other, because it adds more than any other to the common strength, and takes less from that which composes the wealth of a nation,—its stock of productive industry.”

I have mentioned in another place the small amount of the United States regular force, scarce so numerous as our three battalions of Guards, and most of it scattered in petty garrisons; yet a handful of them the other day, under a General Scott (who figured in the Seminole war), countenanced the rather boastful “flare-up” of the American militia at Navy Island, where they were not at all wanted, in the late Canadian affair—that “tempest in a tea-pot,” as Edward first Lord Thurlow would have called it.

Thus much for the external efficiency of “cheap government.” Let us see something of its internal operation. And first, let us ask the question, have they provided for contingencies that may arise among themselves, on the fierce agitation of any public *questio 261 vexata?* Their motto of “E pluribus unum,” might in a single day need changing to “Ex uno plures,” by a facile slip of the loose knot that binds them—just as easily as a small derangement of letters changes “ *Un* it *ed* States” into “ *Un* ti *ed* States.” The interests of the northern and southern states are ever clashing; the spirit of “nullification” is not dead, it hardly sleeps; and public opinion is divided on that black business of slavery, whose “blessings” they will soon be the only civilised nation to enjoy. The French, as we see, have the grace to be ashamed of their share in it; and had they recently allowed themselves to be provoked into a war, it is probable that in any invasion of America they would have proclaimed a universal emancipation of the negroes—with what dire results to their masters it is not difficult to imagine.

It is to be kept in view, that one cause of the cheapness of government in America is its having had English foundations to build upon. Law and divinity are imported ready-made, as well as literature. If they have no regular establishment, or university foundations, they profit by all that we have done; and the advocates of “the voluntary system” may not draw too sweeping conclusions in its favour from a state of things existing in a country so peculiarly situated as America.

If it be an incontrovertible proposition that security of person and respect for property have alone ameliorated the condition of civilised man, and must no less be the basis of all further improvement, then 262 will the Americans find it indispensable, at no distant hour, to increase, to a considerable extent, a military establishment which has been found as inefficient to repress internal disorder as external aggressions. It has been well said, that “opinion, even where a material force exists to back it, is the soul of civilisation and order; how much more so, where, as in the United States, it stands alone, the guardian as well as the creator of the laws. Break down the ideal majesty of that opinion, and the only choice

left is between anarchy and the bayonet." The "sack of Baltimore," mentioned at page 133; the dangerous Philadelphian riots, detailed at page 178; the horrors narrated at page 180; and lastly, the unrestrained plunder at the great conflagration of New York—these, with many other excesses, all show what "American citizens" can do; for what may yet be done, a slight perusal of the melancholy exposition of the American reviewer (above cited) will plainly show. Let Congress put it off as long as they may—further delays will only be prejudicial to their country—a powerful standing force must be had recourse to. "To this complexion it must come at last."

With respect to the last of the three above cited instances of lawlessness—the fire at New York—did not more urgent matters press upon me, I should enter into some details. Let it suffice to say, that when the suffering merchants of that city had succeeded in rescuing great quantities of valuable goods from their burning warehouses, the "sovereign people" 263 of the city came down in crowds, not to assist in arresting the conflagration, but to help themselves liberally from the rich piles of fine cloths, silks, satins, velvets, shawls, &c. &c. Numbers of the country people, too, joined in the plunder, and carried off, openly, *whole boat-loads* of valuable booty.

Places in the American judiciary are by no means coveted: they are every day becoming, among the members of the legal profession, a mockery and a by-word. They are rapidly sinking into what a writer in a new periodical of merit, the *Law Magazine* , calls "a conclave of dowager serjeants." We have it, on the authority of Mr. Wharton of Philadelphia, one of the most accomplished lawyers in America, that if the people are pleased with the present "economical" arrangement, the profession by no means is; he says "the commonwealth" is, as it deserves to be, the worst-served client in the United States. Let us look at the salaries of the judges, in a country of daily increasing luxury, where fortunes are lost and won so rapidly, where nothing but wealth is respectable, and ask whether the bench is always likely to remain as incorrupt as it is now said to be. I wish not to insinuate any thing against the present judges; no doubt there are some now, as there have been many heretofore, who, like Judge Marshall, have lost sight of self altogether for the public benefit; but ought

such virtue and magnanimity be trusted to, so as safely to found a general rule thereupon? Still further to destroy the respectability and independence of the 264 judges, numbers of the democratic party are bent on making their situations annually elective by the people! as if the blind party-ridden and newspaper-influenced mob were the best appreciators of legal capabilities; and as if there were not enow of elections already to keep the public mind in an unintermittent fever, and plunge so many otherwise respectable minds in all the debasements of degrading intrigue. In the present Convention of Philadelphia, violent attempts will no doubt be made by “the majesty of the people” to change the safe *dum bene se gesserit* into the hazardous *dum populo placet* . But let the real friends of Pennsylvanian liberty and order frustrate these politics.

The small salaries of different petty legal functionaries make them greedy of dirty fees; and I was told of a good deal of foul play on occasion of emigrants' deaths, when no relations or intimate friends were present to look after their effects. The “authorities” in such cases—that is, the subordinate law-officers—take possession in name of the heirs, but they are in no hurry at all times to render an account. This occurred in the case of a cousin of my own, who died at New Orleans, a few years ago, possessed of some thousand pounds' worth of property, which were reduced to about as many hundreds in official hands before the family got a settlement. In cases of violent deaths, too, the investigations of the coroners are often tardy and ineffective; nor is it to be wondered at when that important officer's small pay is considered.

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The question of the vote by ballot has been much agitated among ourselves lately. I am convinced, from all I saw and heard of its operation in the States, that the absolute, secrecy, so much desired by some, is not by any means so well attained there by that system as its English advocates do so confidently give out. In the first place, the avenues to the voting-places, on occasions of political elections, are, as I have already intimated at page 171, beset with crowds of importunate and “sharp” (*i. e.* unscrupulously intriguing) agents of the several aspirants. These have their hands full of candidates' lists, which they

do their best to press upon all comers. The names are printed at the top of narrow slips of paper about the length of this page, with a facility of turning the names round hidingly under the blank paper, so as to hold them in a peculiar manner between the fingers and thumb. There is sometimes, on important occasions, a deal of cunning enginery put in motion, bent on baffling all prudent endeavours at concealment. Of this I was assured by a countryman of my own in Philadelphia, who has resided nearly thirty years and realised some property there. Living in the populous suburb of Southwark, where most of the inhabitants are of a low, and consequently fiercely Jacksonian or democratic, cast, he told me he was “almost bothered out of his wits” by the prying scrutinies of his neighbours, whose distrust of his politics, which were secretly Whiggish if not Tory (meaning thereby Conservative), showed itself (as distrust is ever the 266 parent of gnawing hatred) in all sorts of unneighbourly acts and petty persecution. In levying rates on his property for instance—which is, or ought to be, done *ad valorem* —the “select men,” who are invested with that discretionary power, had much more regard to the principle of *ad meritum* . To express freely his opinions in his own neighbourhood on civic or political matters, was, he affirmed, entirely out of the question,—that is, with any hope of even a moderate share of personal quiet or safety; and he said there were not two individuals in the whole city, exclusive of myself, to whom he durst communicate unreservedly his sentiments on public affairs. Thus it is that the intolerance of a tyrannical majority, like the air we breathe, surrounds us everywhere.

CHARACTER AND INFLUENCE OF AMERICAN NEWSPAPERS.

The branch of public rule which has been in our country called “the fourth estate,” may naturally from a section of the subject matter of this letter. Washington Irving, in his Salmagundi, has drawn the portraits of the “slang-whangers” of his youthful times; let us hear what a more recent American writer says of them:—

“These dangerous spirits, the factious, the designing and the dark, incessantly apply stimulants to a disease which requires a mild and soothing treatment. Like unfaithful

menials, they conjure up imaginary ghosts to frighten unquiet children. They abuse terms, they 267 pervert history, they dress up the effigies of old names, they decry knowledge and art, and pander to bad and unwholesome influences. They place the passions between the light of the laws and the public tranquillity. They are *agitators* by trade; men who live upon denunciation and falsehood; and who might style themselves, in the fever of revolution, like Camille Desmoulins, *attorneys-general of the lamp-post* . The worst enemies of popular *rights* are the professional trumpeters of popular *privileges* . In a government of laws there can be no privileges, save such as those laws confer, and they in receiving legal sanction become rights. Neither have our people reserved any power; they have merged it in the laws—they have even prescribed the very method whereby it should be resumed if necessary. Power resides in the representatives of authority. Rewards of public service too—honest and honourable service—ought to lie elsewhere than in a man's own bosom. A good conscience is a good defence, but the state is not to be thanked for it; that brazen wall is not built at the public charge. We may talk of living down calumny, but who wants such a foul fiend dogging his heel through the whole summer of his existence? The statesman, who in a past age went from the cabinet to the scaffold, at least walked through a court of justice on his way, and the next generation raised a monument to his memory—happier in that than he who, in our times, meets no responsible accuser, and awaits not even tardy and posthumous renown."— *North American Review.*

In England, when a man has failed in every thing he may have attempted, it is said there are still two resources left him—to become a coal-merchant, or set up a boarding-school. In America such a one would become the editor of a newspaper; for newspaper writing is a trade that needs no apprenticeship. If 268 American newspaper discussion and information were to be taken as a fair sample of the general mind of that nation, then must a foreigner set it down at a low point indeed. And yet the many-headed multitude, having few or no ideas of their own, are entirely dependent on those they find ready-made in these unsafe and poorly-informed guides, the "one-eyed leaders of the blind." We need

hardly wonder, however, that they are admired in their own country, when we find so many English newspaper compilers eagerly copying their numerous facetiæ, and mistaking their small-beer wit for sparkling champagne. Of their virulent politics, I say little; uninteresting they are to all strangers who do not know them, and truly sickening to those who do. Whatever may be their virulence, it is yet exceeded by their venality; “golden opinions” of editors, in politics, literature, or any other matter whatever, are unblushingly let out on hire. Their double employment is to daub with bought praise, or to besprinkle with unpurchased filth. In the former function, they do for lucre what our obliging provincial newspapers do for love; namely, become puffing-machines for dull books, as soon as their publishers have struck the key-note of praise, sounded by the metropolitan journals “for a consideration.”

I think it was Paley who wondered how human beings got topics of discussion, or passed their time, before the invention of newspapers. To tens of thousands among us, who are fond of “domestic intelligence,” those who pore with so much interest 269 over details of murders, robberies, fires, floods, and other melancholy accidents—these things seem indispensable as their bodily nutriment: insomuch that they might add to their prayers for needful bread, “Give us this day our daily disasters.” In the public mind there is almost always a chasm of ungratified curiosity; and when some Thurtell or Greenacre or Robinson leaps into this yawning gulf, like another Curtius (that is, commits an enormous crime), he may be considered in some sense a benefactor to his country. Immediately we have the dish of horrors served up in all the successive forms of the first “awful” details of the deed; the arrest—examinations—committals—trials—sentence, and execution. The murder committed by Thurtell and his accomplices was the making of at least one of our popular weekly prints. Not to mention how that crime opened (and also filled) the mouths of vast numbers of industrious speech-criers, ballad-mongers, &c. I remember, and cannot help quoting, a few lines of one of the latter “occasional pieces:”—

“His throat was cut from ear to ear, His skull was beaten in; His name was Mr. William Weare, And he dwelt in Lyon's Inn.”

The Rev. Timothy Flint, the American author of several articles on his country's literature in the *Athenæum* , speaking of the tortures inflicted by the Indians on their prisoners, says, that the sufferings of the patient are not so great, especially if he be of a high spirit, as we may be led to suppose. These 270 barbarians, besides having a less sensitive fibre than we, are stubborn to endure as well as stern to inflict; and perhaps, (upon the utilitarian principle of securing “the most happiness to the greater number,” without any regard to individual wrong,) in a state of things where other spectacles are not, the amount of pleasure derived by the spectators at these torturing exhibitions may far exceed the pain endured by the sufferers; who may thus console themselves with the reflection, so kindly tendered by Paley to those who get wrongfully hanged on suspicion, that “they still die by a just law, and are really martyrs for the public good.”

But the great duty of most American newspapers, as of a considerable portion of our own, is to keep the public mind in a continual fret, by showing forth real or pretended violations of popular rights. They will never allow the lower classes to be a moment easy at their work; which is besides incessantly interrupted, not, as in some older countries, by wholesome holiday-making, but by ever-recurring elections; and let the vacant offices be of ever so insinificant a kind, the occasion is treated as one of the greatest moment, and involving “the dearest interests of the republic.” I was sometimes tempted to tell some of the “operative” voters who made all this mighty stir, what Byron said about there being but one kind of domination after all; that of those who had money over those who had none.— Perhaps the French were, upon the whole, a more happy people under their old despotic government than they have 271 ever been since. As I remarked the successive outbursts of their reasonless turbulence in Paris, and their determined indisposition to be pleased with anything the government they themselves set up could do, I often called to mind the lines of Aaron Hill:—

“Gently seize a stinging nettle, And 'twill prick you for your pains; But seize it like a man of mettle, Soft as velvet it remains: 'Tis just so with common natures— Use them gently, they rebel; But rub them hard as nutmeg graters, Then the rogues obey you well!”

The American newspapers are often ludicrously inexact in statements and details of European matters; yet the generality of their readers pin their faith undoubtingly on what they put out in this way, and will scarce ever allow you to set them right, or hesitate a doubt of editorial infallibility. An amusing instance of this occurred to myself at the dining table of a boarding-house in Philadelphia, where there were at least a dozen young gentlemen of good families—medical students at the college there. A discussion arose on the amount of the English national debt, “its history and mystery,” on which subject their papers had made some absurdly false assertions and remarks. Being from “the old country,” I thought my information might pass for something on the occasion, but it did not. The very idea of any one pretending to know better than a favourite editor, seemed to be a kind of crime in their eyes. 272 As those who are too confident are generally the most easily mystified, I took a harmless revenge for their want of urbanity, by assuring them, as soon as the conversation ran strongly on money speculations railroad shares, bank stock, &c. that, on the assasination of Julius Cæsar in the Senate-house at Rome, the public funds there sank full 40 per cent.; and that the more knowing senators ran in crowds to the Forum to sell out. No one seemed to doubt *that* . As for their political discourse, their ignorance of first principles in their own affairs is intense; numbers of them will tell you such and such men act contrary to “the constitution;” this and that measure are inimical to it; but ask them to explain to you what the constitution really is, and not one in twenty of them can tell: this I have put to the proof again and again. Take from them their party terms, and their jargon about Jacksonism, Van Burenism, &c. and they are struck dumb. This comes of being too dependent on shallow and frothy newspapers.—Yet would it be going too far to say, that the Americans are in general an *ignorant* people. Such a measure of knowledge as has been dealt out to them is pretty generally diffused; and as in

times of scarcity in a beleaguered city, if none can be said to have a bellyful, yet all have a mouthful. (A saying once applied, by Dr. Johnson, to Scotch university education.)

One cause of the literary inferiority and venality of the American newspapers, is their being by far too numerous. I was assured that the average circulation 273 of six daily papers in Philadelphia did not exceed 500 copies. The price of an advertisement sixteen lines long, is only one dollar for every three insertions. But besides the avowed advertisements, they insert a great many puffing articles, apparently got up for the amusement of the unwary reader; such as long descriptions of the unrivalled romantic scenery about “Benson's Bluffs,” or some such place, written by a hireling of the tavern-keepers thereabouts, from whose houses he dates his letters, interlarding them with praises of the liquors and accommodations. I knew of one myself, who was sent for this purpose to Cape May, at the mouth of the Delaware, a favourite sea-bathing resort of the Philadelphians.

Advertising being so cheap, some of them are very familiar, and not unamusing. Neighbours will sometimes carry on a long war with one another in rival journals. As for instance: “An ill-favoured person, calling himself Zedekiah Dickson, did, on 8th inst., order a pair of boots, cash price, at my store, which are still unpaid,” &c. Or thus: “Whereas that abominable strumpet my wife, and her no less wicked jade of a mother, did,” &c. The latter pithy words formed the preamble of an advertisement in the last paper I bought, published the morning of my departure.

Newspaper editors are often public orators also; but speech-making is really a kind of prevailing mania among all classes in America. The great field-day of all the public orators is the anniversary of their declaration of independence. All the rival parties get up T 274 grand public dinners in halls and the theatres, where toasts are spun out half a column long; then come, speeches, of a merciless length. There is a saint in the French calendar called St. Babillard: I forget what day his festival falls on—it *may* be the 4th of July.

General Washington, although a prosy old gentleman himself, made a special clause in his will, that “no orations” were to be pronounced over his body; almost talked to death in his life time, he wished to lie quietly in his grave. He was certainly popular; one cause of his being so great a favourite with the Americans, W—r once sneeringly said to me, was because he served all his offices for nothing.

I am not prepared to say, that to the all but universal dead level of information and acquirements, above mentioned, there are no exceptions at all. In Boston, besides Dr. Channing, who has a European reputation, there are not a few superior men. At New York or in its neighbourhood, lives Washington Irving ; who in an unlucky hour pledged himself to his countrymen that he would “never leave them.” In Philadelphia, too, there are a dozen or more of the higher order of writers and thinkers. Of this little band are, a Mr. Walsh, author of different works; Lieutenant Sliddell, a spirited young officer and clever writer, author of some volumes of Travels in Spain and England, under the anonyme of “A Young American;” Mr. Wharton, an accomplished lawyer, and some of his coadjutors in the Review, with a few others. America may boast of several clever women too; as Miss Sedgwick, Miss Leslie, 275 Mrs. Sigourney, &c. In the States are several respectable poets likewise, such as Bryant, Halleck, Dana, and some others. But are all these intellects appreciated as they ought to be? On the contrary, of some of them it may be said, their country “knoweth them not.” They are like so many “pelicans in the wilderness,” or mariners on a desert rock. They live in a kind of mental exile; and if they wish for sympathy with their “labouring minds,” and sale for their works, it is to England they must and do turn their longing eyes. T2

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LETTER XVIII. ADVICE TO EMIGRANTS—RETURN TO ENGLAND—HOME POLITICS —CONCLUSION.

A good deal of what I had meant to say under this head, has been anticipated in previous letters; and it will have been seen by this time, that I am not one likely to recommend

emigration to America. Independent of the forlorn feelings that ever attend a self-banished man, there is a positive want of stability in the prosperity of America, which makes it very hazardous for any mechanic who has learnt but one trade to go thither. The late panic caused by the restrictive measures of the Bank of England, for instance, threw many thousands in all the great towns out of employ, and much reduced the wages of the rest. On occasion of Jackson's contest with the banks, too, business was paralysed for a long time; so much so, that I knew instances of industrious men brought up in the branch of business I was most intimate with, who did not earn a dollar for an entire twelvemonth. Now I never knew any thing like this happen in the worst of times here. The truth seems to be, that in America, as soon as these crises arrive, no one of the moneyed classes will lay out a shilling if they possibly can avoid it. They are all, more or 277 less, traders; there is no steady money-spending class, such as our nobility and gentry, annuitants, &c. whose expenditure is sure to find its way to the pockets of the industrious, come what will. Our law of primogeniture, which throws large masses of money into a few but liberal hands, keeps up the price and quality of our wares, and the working classes—the superior mechanics especially—find their account in this state of things, “unnatural and unjust” though it is said to be. The heavy taxes and the enormous national debt even work for their good-though most of them know it not—by *forcing* money out of the hands of tenacious holders. If those heavy exactions are duly paid, they are as duly spent; and money at all times circulates more surely, as well as more freely, among us, than perhaps any where else. The splendour of our court, the luxury of our nobility, so much cried out against, all add to the comforts of the working man; and this we have a proof of in the misery that ensued among the French lower orders, when, early in the first revolution, the upper classes laid aside their carriages and retrenched their lavish and “insulting” expenditure. The wicked extravagance of Louis XIV. in making a paradise for himself out of a desert at Versailles, has furnished matter for many an indignant comment; but if we take into account the vast numbers of foreigners that are yearly attracted to France by that and other public acquisitions, libraries, museums, galleries of pictures, &c. it will be found that they have repaid their outlay ten times over. It is true 278 that the Americans have laid

out no money in these extravagances; and are the intelligent and curious among the lower orders one whit the better for this parsimony? for there are some even of them who have minds as well as stomachs. Any such will find the United States a land of barrenness.

You may remember, my friend, the conversation we once had, on “the unholy feasts of the rich”—their green peas at two guineas a quart, and peaches at a sovereign a piece. On my asking you what you would have the opulent do with their money, you promptly answered, “Give it to the poor.” Quoting a great name, I asked, did you mean the *industrious* or the *idle* poor; because if the former, I showed, in the cases cited, that they had had the money already. The gardeners who raised, the carpenters and glaziers who constructed hot-houses to cover, the miners who dug fuel to force, vegetation out of season, had all profited largely thereby. And reverting to your virtuously indignant but unthinking proposal, to sweep such “unhallowed dainties from the board, while so many were pining for want of the commonest necessaries of life,” I hinted, that if once tables were put under popular regulation, in the end your humbler steak or chop would have a small chance of being respected; it being so much more agreeable to many natures to share unearned even the humblest fare, than to be at the pains to gain it by honest painstaking, as you do. You did me the justice to own, on consideration, that I was right.

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Mere diggers of ditches, so long as there is so much waste land to till, and so many roads to make may earn higher wages than they can usually do here. I have seen as high as a dollar a day offered for the services of labourers on new rail-roads; which is as much as many men who have learned a regular trade can get. I have also heard of some of the companies strewing dram-shops and victualling-booths on these lines, in which they retailed food and liquors to the thoughtless Irish, and others, at exorbitant rates; so that they got the moiety of their pay back again, and thus had the labour done for half-price. I may observe by the way, that their rail-roads are often flimsy affairs, and dangerous to life and limb to travel on. Canals, too, that shew well on the maps, are occasionally destitute of water! The truth is, these things are often undertaken for speculation in shares, which pass

quickly, like live coals, from hand to hand, and rise much above their value, for a while, but end by burning somebody's fingers at last.

Of domestic trades, the tailor's is perhaps the best in the great towns; shoe and boot-maker's, decidedly bad. Hatters not better than here, if so good; house carpenters about the same; superior cabinet-makers much lower paid; gun-makers also; hand-weaving a little better, not being yet entirely superseded by machinery; paper makers poorly paid; book-binders also. Book printers are lower paid than in England, and still less sure of getting work. Those employed on newspapers in New York are wretched 280 slaves, and earn besides a full third less money than in London. Of *pressmen* , the American employers have of late years found means, by a cunning device, to abridge the numbers by one-half. From the quantities of paper-money issued, there is a tolerable chance for engravers; but for any *artist* to go thither, would be madness. As for clerks, they are no better paid than here, if so well. In a word, let no respectable mechanic think he will better himself by emigrating to the United States. I revert to the shoemakers' business, to mention that one cause of its depressed state is owing to the quantity of their wares made in the public prisons. I heard bitter complaints from several of the workmen about this; and I saw, in New York, printed labels in several windows of shoe and boot warehouses; “No prison-labour goods sold here, which rob the honest poor man of his dues, to give them to thieves!” However, one good feature of the American prison system is, that inmates are never shown, nor their names used, to any one; they are dismissed as secretly as they have been kept, and not without needful money in their pockets. This is a good arrangement for the penitent and well disposed, since they may easily mix unrecognized with some one of the shifting populations of the country. But, on the other hand, the shoemakers observe, this throws a disgrace upon all of the craft, thus augmented by so many jail-taught practitioners.

In a question of emigration, climate is not to be overlooked; and certainly that of America does not agree with many English constitutions. The winter 281 I have already noticed; I have also mentioned the sudden changes frequent in summer. The heats are not so

easy to describe; but it really seemed to me sometimes as if the wholesome freshness and elasticity of the air were altogether gone, and a suffocating oppression weighed instead upon the relaxed frame. At such times individuals given to excesses are stricken with a frenetic malady, called by the doctors there *mania à potu;* while others again find their vital powers more slowly, but not less surely, sink under disease apparently brought on by insupportable heat. At such times, animal matter putrefies rapidly, and it is very difficult to procure untainted meat. Butter nearly loses one of its qualities altogether, viz.—consistence, and may very well be sold by the quart rather than by the pound.

And let not the mechanic who is discontented with his particular situation, and the general state of things at home, think that when he gets upon the American shores he will find himself in “a land of brothers,” such as has been depicted in certain lying “articles on Emigration,” lately inserted in weekly papers in London: he would deceive himself more in this than perhaps in any thing else. He would find Uncle Sam a very cold and distrustful gentleman to “aliens.” One version of their national anthem, “Yankee Doodle,” indeed, contains these lines:—

“America's a dandy place, And all its folks are brothers, For when one's got a pumpkin-pie, He shares it with the others.” 282 But which Mr. W—, already mentioned, in singing repeated thus altered—

“Your song contains an arrant lie, Surpassed by but few others, For when a Yankee's got a pie, He never thinks of others.”

I ought to mention that the sobriquet “Uncle Sam” (equivalent to our John Bull) is a popular filling up of the initials U. S., abbreviation of “United States.”

What I have above said of course is addressed to working men exclusively, As to those who can afford to go to America and return, I dissuade them not; if they fare as I did, they

will have a double pleasure—happy to get there, happier still to get away: in my own case, however, this pleasure, like some others I have had in my time, cost me rather dear.

Of my return passage, I should have even less to say than the first. The accommodations of the pretended “packets” running between Philadelphia and Liverpool, are miserable. The treatment of the steerage passengers was really infamous; and I purposely name the agents, Messrs. Brown and Co., to reprobate their conduct, in squeezing fifty human beings in a space scarce large enough to comfortably accommodate a dozen. The stifling heat and stenches—numerous as those of Cologne, so exactly reckoned up by Coleridge—were past all imagination; if any putrid malady had broken out among the miserable 283 beings, it must have made ravages like the plague. What I saw among these ill-treated victims of Quaker cupidity, gave me a lively idea of what the horrors of “the middle passage” in a slaver must be.

The majority of these returned emigrants were Irish. One family, of six, was from the neighbourhood of Coleraine: they had been in America but ten weeks, and had taken a mortal dislike to it. They were of the class of small farmers; had sold their little property, the proceeds of which were all absorbed in the two voyages, and other expenses. Among the charges they brought against America, one of them said to me, that the victuals of that country did their bodies no good, for St. Patrick had not passed his blessing on them!—I mention, as proving an Irishman to be the same animal all the world over, that on the day of our departure, as some delay occurred by missing the tide, the crowds of Irish who came to see their friends off, could not be content without filling up the interval by the divertisement of three distinct fights on the wharf, in which a great deal of blood was shed, and not a few heads were cracked; extempore weapons being found by breaking up chairs, procured from the nearest taverns, and turning the heavier portions into fragmentary cudgels. Surely the organ of combativeness must be more largely developed on Irish sculls than on any others.

In returning to this wonderful island of ours, after a ten years' absence, I could not help feeling proud of having been born in it. What a little space it 284 fills on the maps—having the appearance only, to a fanciful eye, of a small outhouse annexed to the greater continental structure—and yet its influence is either visible or felt every where. The old boast of Spain, that the sun never set on its dominions, is still more true of England—India in the East, the immense expanse of Australia, Southern Africa, the West Indies, New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, Newfoundland, and Canada, the entrance of the Mediterranean and many of its islands—all these and more are ours; but of the many great things we have done, none will bring us so much credit with the future generations of men as our founding such a nation as the United States . Every extension its population receives—most of whose enterprising natives are bone of our bone and flesh of our flesh—whether from natural increase of numbers, or foreign admixture (for the latter all melt ultimately into the general mass), will serve to spread the fame of our name, to all time, over a mighty continent. Thus, in the vigorous and daily-strengthening hands of the Anglo-Americans, will be deposited our laws, our language, and our manners; and even if, in the revolutions of empires, our existence as a leading European power should for ever cease, we shall yet live, and thrive, and be respected by contemporary nations, in the persons of our western relatives. They are proud of the race they have sprung from, and well they may; let them give us no cause to be ashamed of them. Come the struggle, so long threatened between us and envious rivals, when it 285 may, *they* surely will never wish to see us undergo the humiliation of a foreign yoke.

I believe I have already said, that the men of the States pique themselves not a little on being of the Saxon blood; I might add, that they are very nearly as proud of Waterloo as we are. No man in England is looked at with so much interest by a travelling American, as the Duke of Wellington; and I do believe, if his Grace were to pay the States a visit, unfond of holidays though they be, every city and town would make one to receive him.

And let it not be supposed, from any thing thrown out in these letters, that I set out with personal prejudices against America. As a Republican country—for I was brought up in republicanism—I was prepared to respect it. One of the earliest songs I can remember my father singing to me in early childhood, had this verse in it, which I have never forgotten—

“Vive la the French Convention, Vive la the rights of man; Vive la America— 'Twas in you it first began!”

My poor father was fond of music, and played tolerably on the violin; but of all tunes his greatest favourites were the Marseillaise and Ça Ira. He was one of the persecuted “patriots” of 1794, having been Secretary of a Corresponding Society of the “Friends of the People,” and was obliged to abscond till times grew calmer. He went to his rest some years ago; it is a pity he did not live to see the advent 286 of Roebuck and Wakley, both (the latter especially) tried friends of the people. My old grandfather, after Thomas Muir was sentenced to transportation and hurried off to Botany Bay, went on a pilgrimage to condole with his father and mother. How much I have degenerated from such patriotic ancestors! The last French revolution—respectable as it was, compared with the former—cured me of republicanism. I then saw plainly, that if society were to exist in any thing like tranquillity or comfort, no measures could ever be kept with the *chevaliers de la guillotine* , the men of “the movement.”

Our *mouvementaires* , I found on my return, had made great way. The Whigs had, to please them, removed “the dirty parts” of the old ship, “The Constitution.” They had taken all the heavy and ridiculously *needless* ballast, out of her hold; such as rusty iron-bars, stones, and the like, which so much impeded her way on the course that some of her more adventurous crew wanted her to run quickly on: namely, to—the antipodes of heaven. For this good service done to the country, we have much to thank the Whigs;—and also for the strange vagaries the poor old vessel has been playing ever since; one while driving on like mad, with increased sail; at others, trying to tack about, but oftener merely spinning round

on her lightened bottom, like a dizzy goose not knowing which way to turn, and therefore turning all ways. Would to Heaven she were once more safe in port again!—Adieu.

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APPENDIX.

“A FEW SHORT AND TIMELY ADDRESSES TO THE ARTISANS LABOURERS OF THE UNITED STATES, BY ONE OF THEMSELVES. ADDRESS I.”

(*Referred to at page* 134.)

Friends and fellow-labourers—

The passages put at the head of this address (see p. 124) are taken from an article in a late Number of the *United States Gazette* , purporting to he sent by a correspondent of that journal. That such doctrines as he indignantly reprobates should be openly proclaimed at any time, gives matter for deep concern to every well-wisher to his kind; that they should be so industriously spread abroad just now, when a new kind of “monopoly” (I mean that of the Trades' Union) is threatening to deprive both employer and employed of all right to the exercise of individual free will—these things, I say, furnish grounds for serious alarm to every quiet reflecting man. The writer, above quoted, after some indignant comments, designated several individuals, considered by him as the great lights of the time. and entreated them to come forward for the sake of the republic, whose continued prosperity (whose very existence) he thinks is endangered by the currency of antisocial opinions and practices. I say “practices,” because, as appears by the newspapers, several personal outrages have been committed in different parts, seemingly springing out of the coercive temper of the times. If, as some appear to think, (but which Heaven forefend!) the wilful fire raisings at Boston, and elsewhere, 288 be mixed up with other things which we do not care to particularise just now, then are we far gone indeed on the road to ruin.

Meantime, fellow-citizens, you will perhaps be kind enough to lend your attention to what a brother artisan has to say on a subject of such momentous concern to us all. The hours of leisure at his disposal are necessarily few—he is then the less likely to tire you with a long discussion; they will at all events be thus spent with great pleasure to himself, and, permit him to hope, with some profit to you. An exposition of the opinions of such a one will be less liable to have an unfair bias, than if proceeding from another, of a superior rank, however gifted with talent, or graced with eloquence, that other might be.

Fate so willed it, that he who now addresses you should be a sojourner in France for several years. During his stay in Paris he saw the struggle that ended in the late Revolution. He was afterwards, in common with others of his trade, doomed to suffer personally from the bad effects which for a time flowed from that great (and as some maintain glorious) event; his attention was thereby turned, more strongly than is usual, to serious reflections on the true sources of public comfort and happiness, which were near being dried up in that great nation for a season. It was then he plainly saw, brought home to him in a manner not to be mistaken, how vastly important a well regulated and stable state of things is to the comfortable existence of a great community. The period alluded to may be comprised between the end of July 1830, and June 8, 1832, on which day the turbulent and *levelling* portion of the French Republicans was firmly (it is to be hoped finally) put down by the strong arm of public force, exerted on the side of order and the laws. The sight of antagonist principles, striving for mastery almost daily in the vexed streets of Paris, during the above space of time,—where the arguments used in the strife were not 289 words, but blows,—taught a lesson not likely to be soon forgotten. The subjects the writer proposes to handle fall under four heads, which, for the sake of greater clearness, he will state in numerical order. They are these:—

1. Will be an examination of the popular assertions, that “all men are created equal,” or “all men by nature are equal,” as these phrases are commonly understood; and he will try to prove that they are founded in error.

2. Will be an illustration of this axiom: “The law of security of property is that from which every thing valuable to man has arisen;” and that, by a necessary consequence, any infringement of that law,—whether by disturbing the quiet possession of goods and lands, or houses, and other tangible property—or any calling in question of the ability to hold chartered rights, (if legally obtained), is both unjust and impolitic; and that its immediate effect is to loosen the key-stone of the social edifice, and shake the structure to its foundations. That, further, any attempts to derange, by force, the established order of things, will turn to the present disadvantage of all, and the ultimate ruin of many; and that our class will be that which will suffer from it first and most.

3. Will be an attempt to prove that labour is necessary to man's health of body and sanity of mind; and that the advantages of riches are much overrated by those who possess them not.

4. In this part will be considered the (to us) all-important question of Wages. Also, whether “strikes” are likely to be beneficial to the labourers in this country; illustrated by statements of what has taken place elsewhere. To these will be subjoined a candid examination of the conduct of Trades' Unions, and in particular of the tendency of their interference with apprenticeships, &c.

But before proceeding to enter upon these subjects U 290 which will furnish matter for several other addresses, and before closing this one (which is merely introductory) let the writer of them solemnly assure his fellow-workmen, that it is not with the intention of pleading the cause of the rich, or in the view of forwarding the interests of employers, that he is induced to combat what he considers to be prevailing errors: that these last may be benefited by a general adoption of his views, is probable enough; but this, let him once for all honestly protest, is not his aim. No: he hopes to shew you, before he has done, that it is your (or rather our) interests he has most at heart, in all that he will submit for your consideration. Far be it from him, too, to make intemperate remarks on those who differ

from him in opinion; his intention is to try to persuade, not to call hard names—recollecting how liable we all are to errors of judgment. He will even allow that the man who penned and issued the production above quoted, and such like, may have had honest though mistaken intentions, and that he might not be actuated therein by a “spirit of hatred, of malice, of envy, and all uncharitableness;” the grants this, with all his heart; but he will not the less earnestly contend, that if his aim was to benefit his fellow-men, he set about it in the worst possible way.

ADDRESS II.

The first subject, in the order laid down, is the consideration of the common assertion, that “all men are by nature equal.” Under the subordination of laws we enjoy many privileges without thinking whence we derive them; these, become by constant possession and enjoyment *natural* to us, we are too apt to consider as “natural rights.” But, alas! my friends, “when history first found man, she found him in bondage, if not a slave.”

Of all animated beings, man has his first state, that of 291 infancy, the most prolonged. For several years, parental care must be in continual exercise; let it be intermitted but for a few hours, and its miserably feeble and helpless object perishes. With animals it is otherwise; a few months, or even weeks, is all that is necessary to make them independent of their parents. It would seem, at first sight, that nature had acted like a very stepmother with regard to man. In addition to his long-continued childhood, she gives him neither clothing to cover nor arms to defend himself. All animals are clothed, and many more or less armed —some are stronger, others swifter than he. But for all these apparent defects, she made him rich amends in giving him the gift of reason. “Our strength is made perfect in our weakness.”—A savage arrives at a broad river. He is too weak to swim, he cannot fly across it. He looks round him—he thinks. He has found an expedient, for he drags a tree to the brink, and launches it. He now floats, but that is not enough, he wants something to steer by; he cuts a sapling, and is soon on his way to the further shore. It was the *unsupplied* wants of man that, by calling all his energies into activity, have made him

what he is. Had he, in the supposed emergency, been endowed with the qualities of a bird or a fish, should we have ever known any thing of the noble—the sublime—art of navigation, for, from such small beginnings, such difficulties surmounted as these, has it all arisen. Man—the adult man—whether in the civilised or uncivilised state, is still “lord of the creation.” But man—the infant man—is he not the most feeble, the most helpless, the most wretched of all created beings? *Then* , indeed, we are all “equal;” and if this were the sort of natural equality pleaded for, no one could well dispute it.

Yet as he approaches manhood, and long before he attains to it, he gives unequivocal indications of possessing qualities of mind and body which will be likely to subject his fellows to him, or him to them; and to no one who has had much experience of children need it be 292 told how surprisingly early they begin to exert the subjugating faculties. And this arises not so much from superior powers of body, as of mind; for in families, how often do we see the younger and weaker rule the older and stronger brother! So it is with animals. Take the horse, for instance. While some individuals of the progeny of one sire and dam are remarkable for their fleetness, fire and spirit, others of the breed are weak, sluggish, and of little value. It is said that no two plants—no two blades of grass even—are altogether alike. It is evident then that Nature delights in variety. Even so is it with the mind of man. Lord Rochester has said, in one of his poems,

——“'Tis beyond dispute, Men differ more from men, than man from brute.”

This, no doubt, is exaggeration; we find it in a satire, which usually bears the same relation to a candid description that a caricature does to a portrait. Nevertheless, both have the quality of resemblance, and are, therefore, so far true.

Mankind have lived, and do now live, in three conditions—the savage or hunter, the pastoral, and the civilised or agricultural states. Have we been able to find that, in any of the three, men have ever been found altogether equal? They never have. The next question arises, *Can* they be so? we trow not. With respect to the first of these conditions,

as savages keep no records, we must trust to the accounts of travellers and voyagers; but men like Captain Cook and Mungo Parke, for instance, are worthy of all credit. From their accounts, and those of many others, we find, that even the most savage horde has its superior or privileged class—its aristocracy, in short; and that not only the property, but the lives of the common people, are entirely at its disposition. This rule may be sometimes confined to particular families, and hereditary, as among the Incas of Peru; sometimes arises from the merit or courageous usurpation of individuals, 293 and dies with them; but that it exists every where in some shape or other among uncivilised or half civilised tribes, is positive. The first step in man's progress towards liberty is when he “can call his life his own.” And yet among the South Sea Islanders this does not exist. There, we are told, the lives of the inferior classes of the people are considered by their superiors as absolutely of no value. These abject beings are even, in some places, put under harsh restrictions both as to the quantity and quality of the provisions they are to eat. At the Sandwich Isles, for instance, distinctions are perhaps more strongly marked than elsewhere: in these seas both lives and property depend absolutely on the sovereign will and good pleasure of the nobles, this power beginning with the head chieftain or king; and it is not held lawful for any one but him to eat pork or fowl every day; the inferior chiefs may eat it once a week, or once a month, according to their rank or riches: this too in a country where both hogs and poultry abound! As for the common people—“the baser sort”—so far as Mr. Anderson (who relates the fact) could see, little of any kind of animal food seemed to fall to their share excepting the offals after feasts, given by these aristocrats to their foreign visitors. The most indecent dog-like scrambles would take place for the remains; even the crumbs would be eagerly searched out and fought for. We think such an example of the actual *in* equality of man could scarce be furnished under the most despotic government of any civilised community. Such is the “natural state” of man, where the human faculties, “unfettered by the chains of civilisation,” are supposed to have had the best chance of finding fair play:

—“Ere arts or laws began, When free in woods the noble savage ran.”

If farther examples were necessary, we have only to read the accounts of the native North American Indians, as given by the French Catholic missionaries, viz. Charlevoix, 294 Lafitan, &c., who lived long among them. But it is, as has been already said, every where the same.—Thus much for the savage state. How stands it with the intermediate or pastoral state—has equality ever existed there? We believe not. At least the first book of the Old Testament,—which, even keeping out of view its having proceeded from the pen of inspiration, is the best and most minute record extant of such a state of existence—the Book of Genesis, we say, would seem to contradict such a supposition.

With respect to civilised life, little need be said. That men are any thing but equal, seems plain enough; and what is more, they never can be, so long as there is such a thing as property, and laws to protect the possession and enjoyment of it. Lord Byron said, perhaps rather strongly, that “after all he knew but one kind of government: it was that maintained by those who had money over those who had none.” There are surely other causes of inequality than the mere accidental possession of money; in civilised states, at least, it is certainly *mind* that principally rules in the end.

Perhaps you yourself, gentle reader, may have sometimes had such a taunt as this thrown at you by a boisterous fellow whose notions you may have opposed in some way or other —“D—n you, Sir, am I not as good as you?” You of course, being a prudent sensible man, answered in words something like these, “My good friend, there is no doubt of *that* .” And yet, in your own secret mind, you thought nothing of the kind. You knew well, as no doubt did others of the auditors, that the fellow was at a loss for something better to say, and being angry, and therefore unreasonable, he put this sharp proposition to you like the point of a sword, which your modesty or your discretion would prevent you from gainsaying. Now just think a little of the tendency of a vain doctrine which would *really* sink you to a level with a being of this kind,—obstinate, brutal, and ignorant as he is, and without any seeming natural capacity 295 of ever becoming otherwise. You of course inwardly smiled at his impudence, or pitied the blindness of his self-conceit. On the other

hand, are you prepared to contend that *your* mind is naturally equal to that of a Newton, a Bonaparte, a Byron or a Shakspeare, which centuries can scarce match? Yet, it is sometimes dangerous for an individual to profess openly his unbelief in the ridiculous doctrine of the natural equality of men. The truth seems to be, that we most of us own it in words, though we give the lie to it by our conduct, and even by our thoughts. This state of things certainly gives rise to a deal of *make-believe* , to which it would still be too harsh to apply the name of deceit. For what is the greater part of politeness—or even what passes for “modesty,”—founded on? “A *seeming* preference of others to one's self.” And such honest deception it is which alone makes us supportable to each other. We are all comedians, more or less.

The sophism that “all men are equal,” will always pass current for truth with the mass; it is the favourite doctrine of the weak in body and feeble in mind, who are ever the majority. And yet the great and wise Dr. Johnson thought that two men could scarce have intercourse together for a quarter of an hour in the face of the world, but that one of them would show a marked superiority over the other. How often do we see massters become slaves to their own servants? An instance of this, from French history, may be cited here as being much in point. When Leonora Galigai, Marchioness d'Ancre, was put to the rack, and enjoined to declare by what “wicked charms” and “sorceries” she had contrived to gain such an ascendancy over the mind of her mistress, Queen Mary de Medicis, she very sensibly, and no doubt truly, replied, “Gentlemen, I used no charms, for I am no sorceress; I only exerted the natural influence which a strong mind will always have over a weak one.” But this did not save that hapless lady from being burnt as a witch, with every circumstance of 296 vengeful cruelty. Her imbecile mistress's more imbecile son, Louis XIII., was still more the slave of his minister, Cardinal Richelieu, in whose presence he used to to be as is a naughty school-boy in that of his master. No, men are *not* equal; for there are some natures that mount as readily over others, as a man vaults upon a saddled horse's back, or as oil rises above water.

It sometimes happens that a puny or even a sickly body contains a strong mind; as pearls are said to be found in oysters supposed to be diseased. Some have only heads to plan, others capacities to execute; some are fit neither for the one thing nor the other. It will be vain to urge in reply, that every thing is the result of education and circumstances; these, doubtless, do much, but they cannot do all. The foundation is laid by nature, in each individual's original character, and such as is that foundation, so will the superstructure be.

THE END.

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